

# DIVINITY

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SO HORRIFYING...AND YET SO FASCINATING!

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# SERMON NUMBER FIVE: AND SEX CRIME FOR ALL

by Sal Volatile

Hey, loser...

Now that the Spanner appeal has been thrown out of the Law Lords, Britain's well on its way to establishing the most draconian legislation in the West regarding everyday erotic acts. You too can be a sex criminal just by having that one last spank, nuzzling into that love bite maybe just a touch too much, hey, possibly even moving your hips a little too violently during the juicy bits. C'mon down Andrea Dworkin, right here in UK mon amour, acts of love we all once considered as our kinky British birthright are now classed as assault.

Sure, the case has been well covered, the inn and outs adequately run through in the quality press. But after the Genesis P. Orridge DESPATCHES' witch-hunt concerning bogus Satanic ritual abuse videos, who would have expected, how you say, justice?

The grey weight of frustrated resignation that is part and parcel of British life just absorbs one more niggling nuisance. In amongst the dreary litany of homelessness, unemployment, freewheeling mass poverty and a rolling programme of civilian casualty macro-economics, HM government just took away YOUR FREEDOM TO HAVE YOUR DICK NAILED TO THE COFFEE TABLE! Anyone for fetish-fatigue?

Hey, big deal? You'd quickly been exercising your rights to have your pork sword on the cutting edge for ages, but what the hell, you were going to beat *that* habit anyhow with a handy cast iron New Year's resolution. Holy tit clamps, you had it bad. Truth is, you were getting hooked kid. You thought you could handle this new wave of trendy self-mutilation and designer piercing alone and in your own time. Careful with that hammer (and sickle!) Eugene.

Well, now's the time to draw those lines. All these S&M ghouls are a bunch of middle class wankers anyway, aren't they, indulging their misogynistic power trips – as ever – at the expense of vulnerable girls unable to protect themselves? C'mon, freakfucker, you were drinking in the last chance saloon. YOU WERE ASKING FOR IT!

But now as the wounds heal and the public simmers down from its newsprint jág of tabloid outrage, charges of scrotal sandpaper sex and other hideous perversions are yesterdays news. Consent – that's the big issue.

Problem is, the rust of oppression never sleeps. As Jeff Balance of "Crill" has pointed out elsewhere, the Spanner decision effectively puts thought-crime on the statute. The very fact that you *felt* you were enjoying some act of 'violence', that it was fine by you, that it wasn't any problem, is no defence. Your active enjoyment is crime enough. You compromised yourself in the new complicity of consent. If you confessed to a policeman that you had sexually enjoyed the pain of having you tooth drilled and filled then, from here on in, the dentist gets it! If you got a little hot under the collar after Nurse Ratchel popped you full of pick-me-ups then you're looking at a few years stretch, bub. And rightly so.

The new breed of feminist – male and female – are not quite sure, alongside the confused British public, what to make of any of this. No one wants to be on the side of the Victorian reactionaries, but, whoosh, what kind of pinko faggot scum drive pins through their foreskins? Surely this is the worst possible thing that any human being could ever, ever do to another adult? That neither party to the act harmed the other in any way is, of course, beside the point.

Face facts. This is England. People must be stopped doing rude things to their cheesy wotsits in private if the great British public are at all uneasy. In the same way that nasty pregnancies should be outlawed if the women involved feel any pleasure in childbirth! In the same way sexual intercourse is a no-no if the numerous ecstatic traumas of penetration are slyly celebrated. No pain, no gainsay! Tune in, turn on and drop out to RED HOT DUTCH! Subscribe to DIVINITY! Get it whilst you can. Because they are coming for your genitals and the lights of love and lust are going out all over England.

We are all Rapemen now.

# CORRESPONDENCE

*The murky depths of the readers minds uncovered once again*

*Those of you who think it's all fun and glamour editing this magazine are wrong. Sure, it has its moments. but there's a downside to it. Letters from people who are a few bananas short of a bunch being a fine example. The following two missives are presented as received...*

I hope your magazine is better than the ones in the mag I found your add in  
hope Divinity gets into SILK BITCH  
WANKING TORTURE, Petticoat  
WANKING Punishment  
R.E. Knight  
Glos.

I'm writing to you because I Am interested in leather Whips And Ropes.

I do wish this GOVERNMENT Would Bring Back the BIRCH it Would Stop All the VIOLENCE thats going on in our COUNTRY these FILMS that you Show Are they interesting to Watch they Still use It At the Ilse of Man, they last time I went there my mate got the BIRCH 12 lashes on his back.

he was only aged 13 I see him now and then So that is Why I Would like to see it brought BACK please can you fix me UP with A Woman thats interested in leather ASK her to call for me Im aged 42 i prefer A Very Slim Woman With long HAIR not FUSSy of the COLOUR I hope she has A CAR for A Weekend Stay Well thats All FOR now Please Write BACK AS Soon AS POSSIBLE

I Would like to join your place how MUCH Would I have to pay IVE Been interested in leather ALL my life. I Would like to be PHOTOGRAPHED in leather gear if its OK By You. Please let me KNOW.

Michael McDermott  
Burnley

*Women keen to meet Mr McDermott – and who could resist? – should write to Divine Press. Or see a psychiatrist.*

No doubt the "debate" about Mr Bey will drag on and on but before I forget about it altogether I must give my thanks to Mr Sennitt for putting me right on my muddled thinking regarding Mr Bey. The reasons I said Bey edited KAOS are (a) Like the Islamic carpet weavers who always put an

imperfection in their patterns to avoid offending Allah. I deliberately made a mistake in order not to look too perfect, and (b) on a more mundane level, in 1990 I purged myself of various crap occult magazines like KAOS, NOX, CHAOS INTERNATIONAL, etc, by, well, throwing them in the bin basically. This may have affected my memory recall somewhat. Also I should mention that somewhere in Mr... Sennitt's oh-so interesting listings of magazine numbers and letters received, he's missed the point. It's a simple point, really, and it goes like this. If I want to indulge my interests in unorthodox eastern philosophy I don't want Hakim Bey "telling" me that I shouldn't be into SM. And if I want to indulge in SM I don't want somebody from the, ahem, "Esoteric Order of Dagon" (i.e. Mr Sennitt) "telling" me that Hakim Bey wouldn't approve! Frankly both Messrs Bey and Sennitt need their heads knocking together when they start making authoritarian announcements based on their own personal taste. Indeed that's why I enjoy por(n)ing over the pages of DIVINITY – it seems to me to have a celebratory attitude to sex and weirdness in general that doesn't drag in quasi-moralistic overblown occult ideas. And finally could I deliver a small, consensual of course, slap on the wrist to Mr Flint. If all You've got is the demented ramblings of myself and Mr Sennitt to go on it's not too surprising you think Hakim Bey's a tosser – but without having made the effort to read anything by him it's a faintly daft thing to say. As my mate Wittgenstein said, we must get rid of our "craving for generality", i.e. searching for some kind of simplified rule book to let us know what things are about. It's a complicated world out there. The only authority is *yourself*, and when you look into that, it's obvious that even that doesn't actually exist.

Love, licking and lubrication.

Paul Condon on behalf of the OOO (who are these people? They are whoever you say they are.)

Much as I enjoy DIVINITY, I can't help but feel that something is missing, namely naked men. Apart from those Witkin corpses, I haven't seen a dick, stiff or otherwise, since the second issue. What

gives? I know DIVINITY isn't intended as a masturbation aid, but fair's fair. There are lot's of naked girls, but no boys! You do have a considerable gay readership, you know, so how about giving us (and the women) something to drool over? Surely that's not too much to ask?

Anon  
London

*Okay, here's the situation. When selecting the illustrations for DIVINITY, two things are important. Firstly, the illustration must be visually interesting. Secondly, the illustration must be here. I can only print what I have. And, like it or not, there is considerably less male nudity than female in most entertainment mediums, and those that do feature it don't seem to make such moments available for publication. Give us the chance and we'll happily publish such shots, but it's out of my hands. Meanwhile, here's an extra long schlong to keep you going...*



# DANCING NAKED IN THE MATERIAL WORLD

*Sal Volatile gets down and dirty amongst the fleshtones of America*

**D**eluged beneath the incipient storm of hard-core poised to flood through our closed culture with the advent of the Euro satellites, the daintier delights of slowly unfolded sensuality have all but been bypassed these days. Recently though there looks to have been a gradual resurgence of interest in the almost lost art of striptease. Flirt without hurt seems to be the legend on the lips of the post-HIV G-strung generation.

Most of the midbrow women's glossies and some of the smoothy men's titles have run extensive critiques of an assortment of US strip joints. Indeed, across America there has been a tumescent increase in the number of up-market topless bars servicing the in-your face-cravings of America's executive voyeurs. These are clubs where your fingers sink into life threatening megahungers and then the raw beefy flesh of the tender-loined lap-dancers for desert.

Only in America could the art of slow tease hackroom hump 'n' grind ever really have been considered a talent fit to stand alongside the glorious sexual schmaltz of Paris's *Crazy Horse* with its ranks of salooned beauties – all glorious bourgeois tassled mammaries and star-spangled crotch choreography! In Britain of course we've always had to make do with those hateful, postcard 'n' pub type strippers. Those portly, sink-estate single mums whose life choices either demand afternoons on the game, or nicotine stained toe-rag glamour down the boozer down amongst the vilest tabloid inflamed scum on the block. Maybe every nation gets the strippers it deserves?

Men enjoy these down-market dollies precisely because there's nothing to get in the way. There's none of the distanced hiddenness video and cable offer nor the economic threat of a gorilla pimp in the next room. Really, it's a terminal existence with none of the face-saving anonymity of a porn-film appearance. Yet the appealing, trapped subservience that is a key trigger of the male erotic experience remains. Stripping is almost too brutally honest. It is like that most awkward of exchanges; a relationship.

But Marilyn Suriani Futterman's monochrome photo studies concentrate on portraits of the lives of those at the very bottom of this parade of past-best sexuality.

These aren't pneumatic Hefner-esque Playbimbos. They are – shock horror! – real life stretch-marked babes. And that's how they seem to like them the most in these beer-gutted outlands where everyone wears bulky lumber shirts, greasy baseball caps and sprays their innards with spumes of thinly brewed Bud. Hey, and that's just the girls!

These are good ole' gals for good ole' hoys. Except that all the portraits contain evidence of ineffable melancholy. The kind of permeating misery that lets you know you're in a rock bottom world of hopelessness and desperation; where

just as crippling as the punters'. Futterman's pictures in themselves are not exceptional, but what she reveals has a brooding poetry all its own. Even better are the strippers' own written comments to her keen questions. Many of them displaying a tenderness and humanity utterly at odds with the work they have to do.

This collection reveals the walls of heartache out there in the burlesque backwaters and the real women trapped behind them. **DANCING NAKED IN THE MATERIAL WORLD** is one high-minded book about low-life sex that really makes an impression.



Read it and wriggle!

*Dancing Naked in the Material World,*  
by Marilyn Suriani Futterman.  
Prometheus Books, New York, 1992

women pretend to themselves that doing this is better than grafting away in the slave-waged local sweatshops; where everyone urgently emphasizes the freedom, the camaraderie... In truth these women are like doomed squaddies sharing only a forced friendship of common, lonely dread. And it shows in nearly every shot. The gruelling boredom of pitching you stint just that little bit *further* to get a fat punter to fumble that precious extra dollar into your grimy garter belt.

No one's denying the peculiar solidarity of this sad fraternity of trapped women. But it's a limited sisterhood – fraught with a self-deception, solitariness and hopelessness

# A SHORT HISTORY OF AN AMERICAN EXPLOITATION CINEMA FANATIC

David Flint in conversation with Jack Stevenson



Jack Stevenson is the curator of the bizarre. A historian of the forgotten filth and secret sleaze from years gone by. For years, he's searched the run-down flea-pits, drive-ins and junk shops of America, finding rare prints of some of the trashiest, tackiest movies in history. And he's put it to good use.

Unlike other film collectors, he hasn't hoarded his collection away to be gloated over privately. Neither has he raked in a fortune by putting the stuff on tape. Instead, he tours the world with his remarkable collection, showing it as it should be seen – on the big screen.

His most recent visit to the UK was at the end of January, when he hosted a weekend of celluloid madness at the Scala. The programme included a selection of jukebox music shorts – the pop videos of their day; strange and weird religious films (and believe me, these were bizarre indeed!); and war propaganda of the most extreme sort.

The highlight was the Saturday night screening of "A Short History of American Exploitation Cinema". This lengthy show ran the gauntlet of cinematic scuzz – vintage striptease films ran alongside wild vintage hardcore (which included footage of a dog licking a different sort of bone!)...Twisted sex trailers and extracts from dope scare

shockers followed, along with extracts from *BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR* and an early Annie Sprinkle appearance. There were screentests and sexual madness galore. The show ended with the opening reel from a "documentary" called *ANIMAL LOVER*, in which the on-screen narrator could barely contain his excitement as a weeping girl told of how she'd been forced by Arabs to have sex with a dog. It was mind-bending sleaze at its finest, and the audience felt a mixture of relief and disappointment when the reel ended before the promised demonstration of bestiality in action.

I caught up with Jack Stevenson after the Sunday show and asked him what made these movies so special.

Well basically, they had to deal with subjects that the Hollywood films couldn't deal with. From 1930 until 1968, there was a production code, so Hollywood legally was policing itself – so they wouldn't deal with sex and drugs and these other subjects, or they could only do it in the most sterile way. So the independents would do it. They would give the American people what they wanted, which was drugs and sex and more sex. Bondage and sadism and stuff like that. Hollywood had a lot more to lose; these guys had nothing to lose. There were different phases of exploitation, from the drug scare movies of the Thirties, the sex hygiene movies of the Forties and Fifties, then into the topless movies and hard-core porno of the late Sixties.

Which would you say was the peak exploitation period?

Well, they're all peak in a different way. I consider it dead today because everything's going on video. I consider that exploitation stopped around 1983 or so, when horror movies or gore movies would be issued on video, so people would see them in their living rooms. I think you need the mob mentality, you need to see them in a theatre.

There was also the "instant cult films" from idiots like *Troma*...

Right, they were intended as cult movies, and I think it's hard to do something like that. The movies have to have a certain spirit, and the spirit may be misguided, gloriously so. But I think if you set out to

make a camp movie, it might be mildly entertaining, but it's not going to be that original.

It seems as though once all this stuff began to be well documented in books that were seen as being "hip", it killed the genuine scene to a large extent.

Right, right. Also, in America now, there are no theatres that show this sort of thing straight up. There's no porno theatres, or sleaze cinemas that show Russ Meyer films or horror films. If they're shown, they're shown at festivals and retrospectives. It's all punks and film freaks that come to see it, but you don't have the unemployed people and sailors and stuff that would go to see it in the Sixties. And that was what this was all aimed at...selling books like *ORGY*, that was aimed at the real trade. Now, it's become so popular, it's all in revival status.

You've toured a lot with all these weird movies. Has anywhere stood out as being particularly good or bad? What's the European perspective on all this?

In England they have a bit of the background on it. They have their own approach. They understand it and in some ways they probably excel the Americans in certain aspects of sleaze cinema. In Germany, in Holland, and to some extent in Scandinavia, they're kind of buying in to this kind of thing. They've been infected with it. These countries have their own traditions but it's much smaller scale. They all know who Herschell Gordon Lewis is, and that's from these books.

But Europe has always had its own unique trash cinema.

Absolutely right! There's definitely a European thing to all this. Sometimes it's

**"There's no porno theatres, or sleaze cinemas that show Russ Meyer films or horror films."**

more strange, and it's too bad more of those films aren't seen in America.

*The trash movie ethos seems to have really taken hold in the States...*

In America, there's tons of books on this stuff. All within the last ten years. It started with the fanzines in the early Eighties, then all these glossy books came out. But Herschell Gordon Lewis was in his first revival in the early Seventies. Hopefully, new things are being made too. It would be depressing to think that everything is in a different stage of revival. But as far as movies go, it has to be, because movies are gone. Movies are out.

*It seems that your main motivation for doing a show like this is because you like to see an audience react to the films.*

I'm not exactly sure of what I am or what I'm doing. I mean, I'm not a film-maker, I'm not a rock musician...I put the shows together. Sometimes I don't even have to be there with them. The exploitation show, I do, because I narrate it. But I like showing movies to people and I like digging up obscure movies. I don't know what that says about my sub-conscious - maybe not good (laughs).

*But this involves much more work and less profit than simply putting all the stuff on tape.*

Absolutely. If I was into marketing, I'd be doing video. That's where the money is to be made. I'm not interested in that, really. Mike Vraney (of *SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO*) told me he was obsessed with video. Video to me is like marketing, selling something.

*The variety in the show is great...*

I don't think a whole show of trailers works, because the dynamic wears itself out and then there's nothing new.

*A lot of them blur into one after a while...*

Exactly, that's why you have to varyiate it with ten minute pieces. Nothing in that show was longer than ten minutes. There's a lot of trailers throughout it, but I didn't want a trailer show. You've gotta throw something weird at 'em, like the wrestling films, the stripper films...it's pacing, basically. Mike Vraney specialises in making these compilations for collectors, so he'll sell twenty hours of stripper films or nudist films. You couldn't watch that in a theatre. Three hours of women wrestling...you don't need three hours of any of that. You have to spice it up.

*Even full length features can be something of an ordeal.*

Exactly, that's how I started throwing



things in there. Like *THE BEES*, I had that movie sitting around...and *BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR*. I could never show the whole film, because not many people are gonna come, and many times it's not a very good film altogether, so it was a way for me to butcher stuff and edit stuff into the show. That show, I keep taking things out and putting things in. Each show is a different version. So in another year it'll be a completely different show.

*Has anyone ever been upset by some of the more extreme stuff you show?*

Not really...I bill it as an exploitation show and exploitation is all about exploiting people. There was a guy in Holland upset at the film *SINISTER MENACE*, the Egyptian drug film. He thought it was terrible of me for showing this, that I was showing this horror of drug addicts in Egypt in the Thirties. I told him, "you think this is real? Jerk!". I think the guy was under the influence of drugs himself. His mind was very susceptible. But he was really a problem, he was a real psycho. And another guy in Holland confronted me and said "who's being exploited? What's being exploited?". It was such an incredible question, I didn't know what to tell him. Where do you start? The audience can be exploited, an idea can be exploited, he was being exploited...

*I was pretty interested in ANIMAL LOVER.*

Yeah (laughs). Well, that's a film within a film, because Alex De Renzy, the American pornographer, went over to Denmark and shot a lot of footage, and he bought that film, I'm convinced. He bought the Danish film and brought it back. The Danish film was only fifty minutes, so he needed to make it into feature length. So he took this guy and turned him into a fake sex expert - gave him a dotted tie and a desk to sit behind, some notes, glasses...

*He can barely contain his excitement.*

Right! He's the only one who's getting excited about this. So he made a feature film by tacking on this stuff that had almost nothing to do with the authentic Danish footage. But that girl Boedil, she's well known. You can still buy magazines in Amsterdam and other places with her. She was not hard to find. She was in other films too.

*She was in WHY?*

Exactly. She was also in a film made by Uli Iggi, who's now running the Copenhagen Erotic Museum, and he shot a twenty or thirty minute film with her, with the aid of a Japanese guy. In 1970 they found her and went to her farm...it's actually a beautiful documentary approach that they used. They

**“We did show the other reel once at this theatre in Munich, and people sat there like people at the scene of a car accident or something.”**

shot pictures of her room, pictures of her when she was little, her family...they tried to find out about her life, really. Also, Uli Iggi made another film with her called **PORNOGRAPHY** which was an underground sex film that he made in 1969.

He was an important Danish erotic filmmaker. She's been in a lot of stuff. The version you saw was the exploitation version - total exploitation. That was strictly made for a porno audience. It leads into hardcore sex, too. I didn't show it last night, because in a way, the sex undoes all the magic of the first reel. I showed the full version in a theatre in Munich, and it was the wrong decision. I only show this film with the first reel because it gets everybody's imagination going, and then at the end the Danish guy goes "and now you will see things you can't even imagine..." and the film ends (Laughs)!

*The whole audience was getting rather nervous...*

And then there were probably others that wanted to see it (laughs). It's a total lead-up. What I usually do with these shows is yell out at the end "come next week and we show the other reel!" But we *did* show the other reel once at this theatre in Munich, and people sat there like people at the scene of



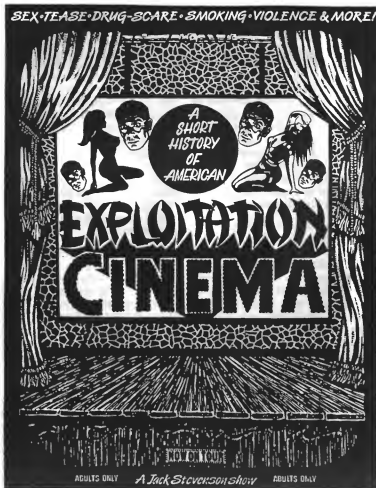
a car accident or something. It's not a pleasant experience, but it's also made for a porno audience, because every shot lasts for ten minutes. That print was run out of San Francisco in 1970, and by God's good grace I got my hands on that print, twenty years later. I brought it back to Denmark, so the cycle of exploitation is completed. Danish audiences loved it!

*Boedil didn't turn up?*

No, Boedil actually committed suicide sometime after she became known, I think about '78. It's a sad story. But she's very interesting to me, because she wasn't a porno actress, she was just a real person with strange interests.

*How can you stay sane in the modern world, America particularly?*

America's okay if you're not actually living in it. I'm living in San Francisco, in Chinatown, and I stay sane by going to the Hong Kong movies. I get away from America. Every time there's a holiday, Thanksgiving or Christmas, I go down to Chinatown and nobody pays any attention to it. You can stay there all day, go to movies, go to restaurants, go to cafés, go to bars - they've got some great sleazy bars down there. So I don't consider myself an American. I'm from America, I've got an American accent, but I cheat every year on my taxes. I've never voted, so...(laughs)...I'm not a good American. But I hope I'm a typical American!





# FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

*Sal Volatile on the new wave of erotica flooding out from the Soviet crack-up*

In that wonderland of capitalism and democracy known as the United Kingdom we of course take for granted all the hard won freedoms and liberties which the average Joe Soviet would cheerfully kill for. Not for us the grim prospect of non-stop poverty, people quietly corroding on the pavements, functionally illiterate children, old folks dying of cold, outrageously constrained sex lives, starvation and malnutrition and constant rounds of terminal recession. Fortunately all these common ailments of communism are almost unheard of in England's green and pleasant lands. However, in CCCP central the poor buggers are suffering.

We may look out sympathetically to our poor brothers and sisters. In the meantime they are making do with an avalanche of home-produced pornography that is loosing itself into society even as the Soviet Union lumbers into the twenty first century.

After decades of heavy duty clampdown people are freeing themselves – and their loved ones – in their own living rooms. Suspiciously enough, much of this output of smut appears to be distributed and marketed by the Germans – an outfit called SVK. So, with the standard of German pornography pitched somewhere aesthetically between a butcher's window and the death pits of Belsen, you can expect the full monty of jaw dropping production values that is the renowned trademark of German 'erotica' the world over.

The moniker for this series is CCCP PERESTROJKA: RUSSIAN TEENS and indeed the Russian taste for the more 'nubile' ladies of its citizenship is particularly well catered for. In a hedge podge of 15 minute excerpts the new Soviet Pomocrats whip out their camcorders and get their young divas rolled out in their couches and bedrooms. All of these girls are properly pubescent and doubtless just over whatever the benchmark of consent now is in Russia, but it's a damn close run thing.

There are ridiculous croaking voice-overs making ludicrous remarks about caviar and vodka as the screen fills with blurry running close-ups of straining girlish pudenda filled with ripe cucumbers or vilely coloured cheapo, cheapo end-of-line vibrators. It's all pleasantly uninspired but brought off with a kind of naive cheeriness

wholly lacking in Western product. This sort of knockabout public sex is presumably a new and far out practice in the East, and the willing (if not exactly able) participants go at it hammer and tongs.

For the most part these loops are just over-long excerpts of girls dressed only in headbands and socks masturbating or sometimes being orally stimulated by their decidedly non-Russian looking partners. There's a complete and utter lack of imagination that seems to stem from a blind hunger just to get this stuff out of the system. Occasionally yet another ghastly coloured vibrator will slip into a winking rectum and a hurried bout of sodomy will ensue. All the usual permutations are played out but much of it is knocked off in curtain drawn front rooms with harsh domestic bulb lighting. Much like the early '20s stag reels, except here colourized with dodgy new home video technology. The tourist insert shots of Moscow streetscapes are all the more amateurish.

One untitled scenario however is pure dynamite. In some enclosed living room two attractively addled middle aged women slowly torment a weeping young girl with dildos and several other implements. The final scenes see this oddly erotic duo tying the girl up and water-sporting over her face in extended slow motion close-ups. It's grimy stuff, but the erotically prolonged ravishment of the raven haired prisoner is accomplished with a groin-torching intensity rarely aspired to in quickie home porn. The scenes of the girl's binding and humiliation are so well accomplished they're probably cut in from some other movie – the whole tone is worlds away from the mundane solo dildo action of most of the material. Wherever it's from, this is S&M gold and the Soviets have got a rudimentary yen for it that will hopefully develop apace.

These kids really seem to have been let off the leash and are rushing headlong into a life of electronically gathered prostitution. Exciting times indeed – money, kudos, hard dollar payments, popsocks, ra-ra skirts, sexy headbands, heavy metal T-shirts. Wow! Next there will be drugs and rock n' roll and MTV! These are the new kids on the Soviet bloc. They are a spunky new breed and they are intent on getting their tits out for their lads. In their race to degradation

and wholesale moral collapse we salute them.



## CLASSIFIEDS

**Elderly Male Disciplinarian**, requires Female to assist with Males late Twenties, Into Cat Suits etc. Also Sub Females, Wimps, Pretty Bpys, 21-35. No financial involvement. Sussex Coast. Reply to: DB2/101, Divinity.



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# CELINE, JULIE AND SUZANNE

David Flint examines two films by Jacques Rivette

Jacques Rivette was one of the founding members of the French New Wave which swept through the cinema like a breath of fresh air in the late fifties. His first film, *PARIS NOUS APPARTIENT*, took three years to complete, finally emerging in 1961, when the likes of Godard and Truffaut had already established themselves. The film was a commercial flop, though it gained critical acclaim. At 140 minutes, it was thought to be simply too long for most audiences...yet this length set the scene for most of his subsequent work.

It was in 1966 that Rivette made the headlines, with his film *SUZANNE SIMONIN*, better known under its subtitle *LA RELIGIEUSE*, and based on the classic Diderot novel of that name. The story, first published in 1796, is a classic of "nunsploration", that much-loved Women In Prison sub-genre. As such, it has all the elements. After her sisters have been married off, leaving the family with no dowry, sixteen year old Suzanne is forced into a convent by her family. She is taken under the wing of the Mother Superior, M<sup>me</sup>. de Moni, but when her protector dies, she is persecuted by the younger replacement, who sees the headstrong young nun as a threat to her authority. Suzanne takes legal action to renounce her vows. This leads to a mass of abuse from the other nuns, under the instruction of the Superior. She is condemned as possessed, starved of food and attacked in the corridors.

Eventually, she is transferred to another convent. This is a far happier place, but Suzanne is soon the subject of her new Superior's lesbian attentions. Being innocent of such things, she is unable to respond, and the smitten Superior goes mad. Together with a monk who had himself been forced into the priesthood, Suzanne escapes the convent, but is unable to cope with the outside world, and kills herself.

The film became a cause célèbre before it was completed. A group calling itself The Sainly Souls petitioned against it, and catholic schoolchildren were told to write letters against the film as part of their schoolwork. Nevertheless, the film was passed by the French censors on March 22 1966. Minister of Information Yvon Bourges was not pleased at this, and ordered

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**LA RELIGIEUSE**

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them to think again. They did, and reached the same decision. Outraged, M. Bourges - on April Fool's Day, appropriately enough - banned the film outright, and stopped any prints being exported.

The uproar was immense. Artists and journalists protested the ban vigorously. The citizens of Bourges demanded their city be renamed either Diderot or Rivette. The director took part in a university "Free The Nun" tour. Claude Chabrol commented that "censors should be put in convents."

Seen today, *LA RELIGIEUSE* remains a powerful, intriguing film - albeit one that lacks the extremes of abuse featured in the original novel, yet makes its point quite

succinctly. It's shot in a stark, cold way that befits the subject, yet has a sly humour running through it. Rivette quietly mocks the institutions of religion and the courts, while at the same time revealing his contempt for them. This is more than simply an attack on religion - it is, as Elliot Stein noted in *SIGHT AND SOUND* at the time, "concerned with the arbitrary exercise of power." Suzanne has been placed in a convent because she is an embarrassment to her family; that is the outrage here.

The performances are universally excellent. Anna Karina is particularly effective as Suzanne, both innocent of her own and others - sexuality and yet wordly



as she battles against the assorted injustices that she is faced with. And the film as a whole is a startling success, and acted as a prototype to the numerous less intellectual "Nuns Behind Bars" films that followed.\*

Rivette's best known and most commercially successful work is **CELINE ET JULIE VONT EN BATEAU (CELINE AND JULIE GO BOATING)**, made in 1974. Unlike many of his other films, this is essentially a light fantasy, with magic at its core. At 187 minutes, it may seem a somewhat imposing prospect, but never have three hours watching a movie gone so quickly. The film is an utter delight from start to finish.

Subtitled **PHANTOM LADIES OVER PARIS**, the film opens with librarian Julie spots a girl running across a square, dropping her possessions as she goes. Julie collects the things, and gives chase initially to return them, but quickly taking part in a strange game that sets the scene for the film as a whole. The next day, the girl Celine, a stage magician, arrives at Julie's flat claiming that a mysterious "they" are after her. While Celine rests, Julie tracks down the house that Celine had told her of. She enters, but is then forcibly ejected in a daze. In her mouth is a candy, which when eaten later, provides strange memory flashbacks to a melodramatic period drama, where a widower, his sister-in-law and his child's governess are acting out a web of intrigue,

which culminates in the child's death.

Both Celine and Julie undergo this experience on a number of occasions, the acts repeating each time, but revealing a little more with each candy trip (there's an obvious LSD reference being made here). Eventually, they arm themselves with magical protection, enter the house together and seek to rescue the child. They inter-act with the ghosts until they have their opportunity. The film ends with Julie and Celine going boating, Julie stating that she knew the house as a child. Celine doesn't believe her, implying that she has invented the entire story.

The title "Julie And Celine Go Boating" is a literal translation from the French, but fails to reveal the true meaning behind the film's name. A more accurate description would be "Julie and Celine are told a tall story". They, and the audience, are being strung along in what may well have been nothing but an idle fantasy. No matter. What's really important here is the sheer wonder of this film. Every scene is carefully composed, every action tinged with a sense of the magical. It's a visual wonderland.

There's a certain connection between this film and that other French marvel **L'ANNEE DERNIERE A MARIENBAD**. In both films, we are presented with continually repeated scenes, where small details are added each time to further the events. The difference is that

while Alain Renais' masterpiece left the audience to complete the pieces of the intricate puzzle on their own, Rivette puts the audience in the film, in the guise of the title characters, who constantly go back in search of more information, and who share our frustration when we are not told enough.

And much of the success of this film is due to the two stars, Juliet Berto (Celine) and Dominique Labourier (Julie). It's rare that two people have ever seemed so real and so likeable in a film. Some of this is certainly down to the fact that the two of them improvised much of their dialogue, giving it an informal, genuine feel that is tragically rare in even the most realist film.

Nothing short of glorious, **CELINE ET JULIE VONT EN BATEAU** will leave you dazzled and delighted. It's the credible alternative to the "feel-good" movie and as such, should be embraced by all devoted followers of film.

\* - There has been another film based on Diderot's novel, **IMMAGINI DI UN CONVENTO**, made by famed Italian hack Joe D'Amato. It does not compare to Rivette's work.

# CARNIVAL ARTS

The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow, profiled by Mark Day



**T**he first time I put my face in glass," says Jim Rose, carnival barker for his eponymous Circus Sideshow, "there was the most horrible little force field not letting me go down in there. Because as a kid, man, you know when you're small that glass is sharp. And you're scared."

The secret?

"Basically, you've got to know your glass.

I know a Listerine bottle from a Worcestershire Sauce bottle from a wine glass from a pickle jar. I know about how much weight it can handle."

Rose also knows the squeamish British public's tolerance level for human oddity and body-manipulation. He found out the hard way. A (perhaps ill-considered) appearance on much-loved tabloid-TV flagship, **THE WORD**, drumming up

business for his Spring tour, helped fuel squirming public outrage. Cue unwelcome cancellation for a number of dates, including non-appearances in Portsmouth, Bristol and—figure this one out—weirdness friendly festival-toutin' Edinburgh.

So what's all the fuss about? Thankfully, not some self-reverential new-age art-wank performance-shitck. Just, as Rose puts it, "traditional circus stuff from the Thirties and Forties. This is the same kind of stuff your Aunt Mabel used to see."

Such as? Well, sword-swallowing and slug-eating, courtesy of The Human Terrarium (why not, argues Rose, people eat oysters, do they not?). Endurance body-piercing, with the man they call the Torture King ("He festoons and punches through his face neck and torso over forty hat pins and meat skewers," sez Jimbo). Weightlifting with Mr. Lifo, who uses his

body piercings rather than more traditional methods — ouch! Not forgetting the man with a plastic pipe comin' out of his nose, Matt "The Tube" Crowley, and his alternative stomach pump (six bottles of beer, some ketchup and chocolate sauce in, some weird green concoction out). Sad but true, audience members jostle for the privilege of a slurp of what he pumps out of his innards.

So what's the big deal?

Some background for ya — with circus-blood running in the family, the young Rose set about re-discovering the techniques and skills that lay at the heart of the near-extinct sideshow-tent human marvel revues; as personified by Todd Browning's **FREAKS** and the recently re-published **MEMOIRS OF A SWORD SWALLOWER** by Dan Mannix.

According to Jim, they died out as much because of the opportunism of hustlers (who resorted to wholesale fakery when the supply of "genuine human marvels" outstripped demand), as by the spread of film and television. The only difference between his set-up and the old-time freak-tents is that each act he presents would have been a bill-topping headliner in their own right, way back when. Otherwise, "everything you see is exactly as advertised."

Having picked up a few basic set-pieces (the human-dartboard, the nail-up-the-nose trick etc.) he busked L.A.'s Venice beach, eventually graduating to working alongside belly-dancers at a middle-eastern restaurant in Seattle. Jim recalls, "people started driving all over to find me — it became a rage!"

As Rose began teaming up with a posse of like-minded spirits (Lifo, Torture King *et al*) he found himself fronting something with universal appeal. Their real break came when they were invited onto the second Lollapalooza tour (an American travelling festival, loosely derived from the familiar, English "Reading" format by ex-Jane's Addiction instigator Perry Farrell). Despite heavy competition from high profile college-radio demi-gods like Ministry, Soundgarden and the Jesus And Mary Chain, it was Jim's Circus Sideshow who stole all the headlines (Ministry's Al Jourgenson was impressed enough to insist that recent collaborator, that ol' shotgun surrealist William Burroughs, check 'em out — tribute indeed according to Mr. Rose).

Following that high-profile engagement

(and "Human Dartboard for Clinton" spots recorded for MTV) Rose took his crew on the road. And sure enough, the prospect of his merry men treading UK soil has provoked some creaking local councillors into wholesale, frothing condemnation (not a uniquely British trait, but Rose claims that it's been particularly fierce here).

They shouldn't have bothered. As Rose sez, "people don't generally write about our humour. People are too stuck on what we actually do, but what makes the atrocities palatable is our bizarre humour."

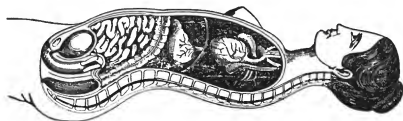
The Circus Sideshow is rip-snortin' good fun. Rose is a showman from the old school, hyping up the audience to near-hysteria as his troupe go through their paces. In truth,

Torture King has already inserted most of the needles before he comes on stage, gruesome though their unveiling is. Lifto does nothing you can't see in most body art/piercing mags. Matt "The Tube" is simply indulging in a little self-inflicted force-feeding. If the Human Terrarium makes worm-guzzling look easy, that's because it probably *is*, once you've set your mind to it. It's the showbiz element that injects the drama. The only room for complaint comes from the fact that some of the stunts, like Rose going head down in glass-shrapnel, don't really *work* unless you're close enough to get a good look at the action. Otherwise, it's all twice as much fun as just about any other form of live

entertainment I can think of.

Sadly, it now looks like Rose is heading for a career in television, publishing and video work. Less hassle than flying across the Atlantic only to be told the R.S.P.C.A. don't like the look of one of your star attraction's dietary requirements (like worms have more feelings than cows? go picket Sainsburys!)

If you missed out due to your local council's reticence to let Rose do his thing round your way, you'll probably only ever catch the side-show on video. So why not prove that *not* getting to see this stuff is far more corrupting. Vent your rage. Go kill a councillor.



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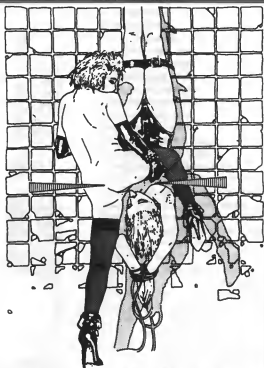
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art: Trevor Brown. Not taken from the published book.

# THE SCAPEGOAT

*The trials and tribulations of being a female masochist  
recounted by Deborah Ryder*

**A female masochist? Not politically correct! A female masochist who writes about it? Burn the books!**

We are the last scapegoat. When almost everything else is acceptable in society, sado-masochism remains beyond the pale. We do not need or seek the approval of the brainwashed masses who define "normal" as the missionary position one-point-three times a week and feel no tremor of excitement at the sight of a cane or lawse. They will never know what they are missing; leave them in their apathy. But they will not leave us alone.

I hear much about problems in the USA but every country can quote examples to prove that our repression is worse than your repression. Last year, in Britain, a number of people were given long prison sentences for their involvement in sado-masochistic practices. They were all consenting adults, all participating by choice, no-one needed medical attention after the session – but those factors did not mitigate their "guilt". One of those sentenced was a tattooist who was merely practising his trade (with every precaution against infection). This is Britain in the Nineties. Some time ago, I went for a routine cervical smear test. The doctor noticed marks on my buttocks and she (yes, of course it was a female doctor) informed the police. I wonder what would have happened if I had not been able to afford a good lawyer. I wonder how many women avoid essential health examinations because they fear investigation. And feminists who campaigned so vociferously for access to medical care are conspicuously silent in this matter. Naturally they must oppose anything that truly liberates woman because that achievement would destroy their own *raison d'être*. In the drab world of feminism, where everything is either politically correct or forbidden, a woman who acknowledges her unorthodox sexuality is seen as a threat. Feminists have to perpetuate the out-moded designation of woman as victim. There is no place in their circumscribed view for a woman who wishes to be regarded as a sex object. Perhaps they protest too much; do feminists make themselves deliberately unattractive to guard against invoking male desire or to conceal the fact that, even if they made the best of what they had, there would be no stirring of interest?

It is natural to hate what one fears. All life-denying theologies, whether religious or political, fear those who do not conform. And they envy those who have the courage to enjoy life. Certainly feminists hate what I do. I hold up a mirror into which they dare not look. Many of them use their political activism as a cloak to conceal and deny feelings which they cannot banish.

I write and publish novelettes on sado-masochistic themes. I have so far avoided

prosecution for trading in porn because all customers are required to sign an application form and pay a small fee to join the Book Club; slightly more latitude is allowed to members of a club than would be permitted to buyers on the open market. I have had surprisingly few problems with Customs when sending books abroad. They have been read by US Customs, who must have enjoyed them, because they let them through. The only country which has



Photo © James

refused to permit this dangerously corrupting influence within its boundaries is South Africa. Perhaps I should regard that as a compliment.

I had to self-publish because commercial "porn" publishers told me that my work was too far-out; hardly surprising. What was surprising was the other objection, that my books contained an occasional humorous incident, and laughter is strictly forbidden within SM. Porn-publishers, struggling against the myriad legal prohibitions, have also created restrictions of their own, which diminish the quality of their output.

Other sexual variations, such as gays, are no longer fair game; in some cases they are a protected species by law. All of humanity benefits from this liberalisation, but the sado-masochists gain less, because Society must still have someone to blame for its ills. If you enjoy stories about abduction, whipping and rape, does this mean that you are going to kidnap a woman and enslave her? Of course not. But the Law suspects that you would. Instead of seeing sexual fantasy as it really is, a useful escape-valve, it is believed to be an incitement to crime. Criminals who have been caught claim that pornography inspired their misdeeds, and the plea is accepted. Having been so inflamed, they are not responsible for their own actions. This delights the Establishment because it gives yet another opportunity to attack their favourite scapegoat.

It is human nature to fear the unknown. Sado-masochism, always forced into secrecy, is unknown and incomprehensible to "straights", even to those who do not automatically condemn. Sado-masochists derive sexual satisfaction from the infliction and/or receiving of humiliation and pain. Perhaps our greatest problem, the reason why we cannot be understood, is the fact that we cannot explain WHY. The neurons in our brains are connected in a certain way – I know that doesn't really clarify the situation. Incidentally, the words *sadism* and *masochism* are frequently misused in modern parlance; originally they represented sexual variations and that is how they should be understood.

This is what turns us on. Sometimes we play-act fantasy scenarios. Props and costumes can be elaborate, simple or non-existent. Imagination is the vital ingredient. My favourite is the terrorist captured and interrogated by the security forces. I know that, in real life, a simple chemical would induce her to disclose all the information, but we are not here concerned with real life.

Sado-masochism has been called "the

English vice". We are the experts. Or so we think. We have a great tradition, in all recorded history until the present squeamish century, of corporal punishment enthusiastically applied to juveniles and inferiors. Serfs in thrall to the Lord of the Manor...the Victorian housemaid who knows that dismissal would mean starvation...school pupils, prison-inmates, lower ranks in the armed services. Our language has been enhanced by such expressions as "no room to swing a cat" – nothing to do with a feline, it refers to the fact that the flogging of sailors, for which the standard equipment was a cat-o'-nine-tails, might only take place on deck, since the whip could not be properly applied in the cramped quarters below. The British have popularised such beautiful and awe-inspiring instruments as the birch and the riding-crop and riding-whip (two completely different items, though often confused by the uninitiated) and the Scots must be given credit for the tawse, a two-tongued strip of thick and heavy leather which is, I am told, one of the more difficult instruments to apply correctly. From the other viewpoint, the suppleness of the leather adds another dimension to the sensation. Continuing the catalogue of British contributions to the art of sado-masochism, it was an English Master who first uttered the immortal phrase 'Bamboo is for beginners, rattan is for real', which I have seen reproduced in several (some unexpected) publications. Bamboo and rattan are both canes, but the rattan is considerably longer.

The phrase "crossing the pain barrier" refers to that mystical moment when pain becomes pleasure – and those who have not experienced it will not understand what I mean.

Whatever turns you on...and everyone's fantasy is different. It does no good at all for the image of sado-masochism to have to admit that people fantasise about the Nazis. I do not understand why. They cannot be regarded as dominant, since they were, all of them, "only obeying orders". Stop seeking for explanations in this scene. Accept that everyone has the right to play their own games. Compulsion by the dominant is in the fantasy, not in reality. The real compulsion is one's own needs and desires. One is seeking temporary relief from responsibilities, though entirely aware that those responsibilities will still be there when the SM session is over. Everyone needs a respite from day-to-day life, but the partners in a full-time SM relationship must deal with it carefully and intelligently,

otherwise it will burn itself out. Generalisations are impossible. Some sadists and masochists are more than usually assertive in everyday life, but this may be due to the fact that people involved in SM are generally of higher intelligence than the average and are therefore likely to be more materially successful. For the same reason, they are unwilling to have their proclivities made public knowledge, even if that entailed no legal risk. In Britain, we have a problem called "the gutter press". Hacks who are not competent to deal with real news gravitate towards the salacious tabloids and naturally sex is the kind of scandal that sells most papers. If they have a slack week when they cannot expose a public person as gay, adulterer, animal fancier or any other titillating variation, they "expose" an unknown who happens to like spanking or some other amusingly *outré* pastime. They may exaggerate or misinterpret, but fortunately can be satisfied with trivia and will not dig for the darker secrets if there are any. There is no law to stop newspapers telling lies (legal action for libel is not possible unless one has tens of thousands of pounds to risk on lawyers' fees, and can you see any court awarding in favour of the libelled person if he/she was a sado-masochist?) but nowadays the public are so satiated with scandals that they are just another story and hardly noticed, even by the neighbours. Remember, if the Press turns up on your doorstep: these are not investigative journalists. Give them a "no comment" and they will go away and make up a story which bears no resemblance to reality, so no-one will take any notice of it. No-one nowadays should be deterred from doing their own thing by the thought of being headlines in a Sunday tabloid. Of course it has happened to me, several times. If it happens to you, don't worry – no-one else will.

Most SM people become aware of their interest at an early age, usually before puberty, but this has nothing to do with childhood circumstances. A popular misconception holds that punishments awaken the desire for sado-masochistic activity, but there is no valid evidence for this, and those who claim that their interest was so aroused are those who see SM as merely a part of their sexual repertoire. I mean no criticism by this, but to a true SM devotee sado-masochism is the only form of sexual activity which gives real satisfaction and he would feel the same way if he had had no human contact in his life. Sado-masochism is within one's own self. Like all aspects of self, it can be influenced





by external factors, but it cannot be created or destroyed.

I think my first realisation of my peculiar interest was at about four years old. In a story-book, "Peter Pan", the children had been captured by pirates and there was a drawing of Wendy, rather well-developed for her age and wearing a flimsy night-dress, tied to the mast with the pirate captain leering at her. I wonder if the artist realised that he was creating a bondage picture. I wonder if others saw it that way. During childhood, I occasionally tried to act my fantasies, usually alone. Grandmother's stretch stockings were ideal for self-bondage. I had very little communication with my parents and I knew that this was a subject which could not be discussed.

They never found out - even on the occasion when I persuaded friends to act the "Peter Pan" story with the clothes-line and the poplar tree. The game came to an abrupt conclusion with objections from authority regarding trampling on vegetable-garden

and misappropriation of washing-cord, but I remember it had been vaguely disappointing because my friends did not see it as I had done.

Sado-masochism has been described by many as a lonely way. It should not be so. Everyone in the world is either dominant or submissive. By this I do not mean that everyone has or could have aroused an inclination towards sado-masochism. Dominance and submission take many forms. The boss who scolds his secretary for an error might be horrified if she lifted her skirt and bent over the desk. Or he might not. Worth a try? And here is a paradox. It is usually the submissive who has to do the hunting. A dominant man is such a rare being that, if he advertised (insofar as that would be possible in present restrictive times) he would get trampled in the rush. (As far as I know, that was the only time the gutter-press caused serious inconvenience; they exposed a Master and would-be slavegirls laid siege to his house. Less than a quarter of them were acceptable.) Dominant ladies are more frequently operating for commercial reasons; nothing wrong with that, they provide a vital service. Some are genuinely into SM, some are doing it for the money but are sufficiently competent actresses to keep their customers satisfied. Dominant men often do not require a financial tribute. However, payment for services defines more clearly the parameters of the relationship. I need have no fear that he will call me at the office and frighten my assistant. Nor is there any danger that the situation will be complicated by that dire syndrome generally known as "falling in love" - a predicament which has much more to do with self-esteem than concern for the other person and which, within an SM relationship, can be stultifyingly restrictive.

I have still not dealt with the question of

contact. Especially if one lives far from the main centres of population, this is a serious problem. Sometimes a Master and a Slave find each other by a psychic process (there seems no other explanation for their mutual recognition). I have never heard of anyone establishing a successful relationship, even in the short-term, through a contact magazine. That is hardly surprising; such publications are so regulated that advertisements have to be almost meaninglessly ambiguous. Teach a "straight" sexual partner to be S or M as required: but this is unlikely to be satisfactory for either. If anyone can devise a guaranteed method of making suitable SM contacts, he/she deserves to be ranked with the discoverers of penicillin or nuclear fission (or both).

Meanwhile we make friends and make mistakes - in equal proportion if we are lucky. I started writing my novelettes to sublimate my frustration and I suspect that some of my readers use them for the same purpose. Nothing wrong with that. Masturbation is good for you, and you don't need to put a condom on a book - even though the censors wish they could.



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# LET'S ALL GO TO PARTY CAMP...

Or: Sexual Neuroses And Everyday Handups Of The Average American Retard With A Breast Fixation - by **Howard Lake**

Of course, when you think about it, it's probably we Brits who are to blame.

After all, it was we who first proved that dumbass movies jam-packed with sexual innuendo and mindless setpieces could be sustainable with **CARRY ON...** movies, those great works of art that bestrode the Sixties like a celluloid colossus, Sid, Babs, Jim, Ken and the whole gang. Funny thing was, the Yanks refused to bite, despite our best efforts, spurning **CARRY ON COWBOY** and even **CARRY ON FOLLOW THAT CAMEL**, featuring Phil Silvers. No, the Americans reckoned, our sense of humour is rather more developed than that. Not for them the need to sink to the bottom of the barrel in search of cheap laffs and quick bucks.

Nowadays you wonder how such a state of affairs ever existed, as lowbrow US movies clutter video stores like so many wetbacks under a trailer crossing the Rio Grande. There seems to be hundreds of them - all featuring the same plotlines, staple ingredients and dramatic personae. Check off the names...**PARTY CAMP**, **PORKY'S**, **MEATBALLS**, **ASSAULT OF THE PARTY NERDS** and so on into infinity. Chances are all of us, in a fit of psychotic ennui, have found ourselves watching one of these epics and wondering why we ever bothered. Mindless entertainment - that's why we bothered. Unchallenging, unthinking, untalented crud they may be - but who cannot say that, with a can or a joint in hand, they didn't snicker *once* while watching.

There's a place for everything in a multifarious world. A place for high art and a place for art lower than a grasshopper's clitoris - see? Just had to slip that one in. The appeal of mindless movies is that there is no challenge to the viewer - you know what to expect even before you slip the tape into your VCR. You know that you will see naked breasts, hear jokes concerning penile development, watch some zany prank played upon a stuffed-shirt bluenosed authoritarian prig. All of these elements come guaranteed, because the makers of these films know their audience; a catchment group consisting of, in the main, sexually immature, doubtless frustrated, male juveniles seeking consolation for the fact that life doesn't quite match the image they'd wish it to be.



The genesis of this artform lies less in **CARRY ON** than with Benny Hill. His American success must have surprised the likes of Gerald Thomas and Peter Rogers as he triumphed where they had failed in bringing smut to the New World in a big way. Hill, though, had timing - catching the backwash of permissiveness in the 1970's as America stumbled out of its repressed fug and suddenly adolescents were besieging cinemas, demanding the T&A to which only Pop had access in the movies of Russ Meyer and his disciples. Nudies pre-Seventies were never targeted at this hormonally-hyperactive market, but as sexual exploration reached a younger audience, so films developed to exploit that masturbating market. The granddaddy of them all has to be Bob Clark's 1981 **PORKY'S**, the movie that set the ball rolling, though it was by no means the first film to hit the mark. That accolade could well go to **MEATBALLS**, made in 1979 by Ivan **GHOSTBUSTERS** Reitman. **MEATBALLS**, starring Bill Murray, established the ground rules for the quintessential mindless movie - the Summer Camp flick.

True devotees of mindlessness know that summer camp movies are the real lowest of the low. The rules are easy to follow and rarely deviated from - take a clutch of sexually-awakening teens and dump them in a rural setting. Surround them with authority figures - a bumbling camp chief, a sexy nurse; a fanatical military lunatic in charge of the ROTC; maybe a few lithe aerobics instructors and a steroid-bulging gym instructor and let rip. A dynamic soon is established, with the teens seeking to subvert the quasi-fascist regime and exchange wondrous bodily fluids with their

male or female counterparts. This will involve all manner of contrivances as the knowing male teen zeroes in on the fragile virginity of the Nice Girl Who Might, while his less experienced colleagues end up enjoying the pleasures of the Bad Girl Who lilt and, along the way, be initiated into male adult rites such as alcohol (and sometimes) drugs. They will be forced to confront the abyss of maturity and learn to stand on their Own Two Feet...and, more than anything else, they will uncover the secrets of sex. This is where the juvenile wish-fulfilment really gets hot - the vacant bimbo satisfying the cravings of the acne'd hoards through



voyeuristic delights; the ideal sexual birth for any fifteen year old boy who wants to pop his cherry without the need to form any kind of relationship. Again, it's the Benny Hill syndrome - sex without ties, voyeuristic sex where you don't get your hands all icky with the smell of female.

This idea comes full-bore with the **PORKY'S** sub-genre, where the entire plot



# INCOMING FRESHMEN

revolves around young males trying to shed themselves of the burden of virginity. Israel, a nation whose film industry is hardly esteemed world-wide, seems to have constructed their entire output around such lame comedies as **LEMON POPSICLE**, **GOING STEADY**, **THE LAST AMERICAN VIRGIN**, etc, where the male adolescent's need to get his rocks borders on the hysterical and the female is

seen as nothing more than a step on the road to true manhood. It doesn't take an Andrea Dworkin to see that rarely do females emerge from the genre with any kind of value—true, occasionally they can frustrate the rampant male lust with the kind of cruel trickery young males seem to expect of the conniving, semi-sadistic species, but the victory is always secured by the guys in the last reel and it is the dweeb who struggles

to the heights of pussydom victorious.

And that's important as, viewing this genre as a whole, it would seem that dweebs, nerds, whatever one calls them, are those who will inherit the Earth. The common denominator in many mindless movies is the rite of passage type struggle of a poor guy hindered by lack of muscle, looks, and the wearing of spectacles to get laid in the face of stiff opposition presented

by musclebound, handsome jocks who can get their oats simply by clicking their fingers. In the American psyche, strength means success and usually the dweeb wins out through mental muscle over physical, brain over balls, with the babes seeing the error of their ways and the jocks' shortcomings exposed – often being weakened by having their latent homosexuality brought to the babes' attention. It's straightforward jealousy from start to finish; wish-fulfilment for all the skinny dudes who ever yearned to pork the football team cheerleaders. Everything they whisper behind their betterdeveloped peers' backs comes true for them and the tragedy of American society – beauty and brawn bringing esteem and success – is overturned. In these movies, the downtrodden *can* triumph despite their limitations.

These movies are the real America – America seen through the eyes of the silent majority of losers. **MEATBALLS III** probably says more about the state of the nation's youth than a hundred versions of **RIVERS EDGE**. These films do not deal with the dispossessed or outsiders; they are for the lumpen mass of middle-class underachievers whose numbers are legion. They are not about rebellion, merely the process of attaining adulthood – their audience will not go on to live outside the law, but will become bank clerks and supermarket managers...as will the generation that follow them – and doubtless the genre will continue as long as young boys remain fascinated by big breasts and frustrated by wanking themselves into oblivion. Let's hope the genre does survive – if nothing else it provides a wonderful opportunity for the cineaste to gloat over embarrassing turns by established performers either at the beginning or depressing ends of their careers. And, despite all that has been stated, there remains a strange kind of innocence to these movies – which is just as well, as the next step from summer camp is yet again summer camp, only this time Jason is lurking in the bushes ready to hack up sexually precocious teens who should have stuck to merely pecking in the window of the girls' dorm. Such is the way of things...one minute sex is new and fascinating, the next you die. No wonder they're so screwed up.



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# MUSIC FROM THE DEATH FACTORY

*David Flint delivers his first annual report on three boxes full of **Throbbing Gristle***



**I**ndustrial music for industrial people. The term was coined by Monte Cazazza as a slogan for Throbbing Gristle. The four piece outfit played their first gig on 6 July 1976 and five years later had broken up. They played a total of thirty-six live shows, released five albums and four singles. Yet in 1993 they still arouse the same feelings of fascination, fear, disgust and horror that greeted their first appearance.

Throbbing Gristle consisted of Chris Carter, Peter "Sleazy" Christopherson, Cosey Fanni Tutti and Genesis P. Orridge. They'd previously worked together on COUM Transmissions, a performance art group, and it was the experimental elements of this medium that they brought into the "rock" field. Their music was almost entirely improvised, with only a few tapes and basic ideas formulated beforehand. Live, they presented a show which was entirely unpredictable, in terms of both music and action. Audiences could often be utterly hostile, particularly in the early days. When the Sex Pistols were still a gleam in Malcolm McLaren's eye, TG were scaring the pants off MP's and the press. They were a dangerous force to be reckoned with.

Their first album was **2nd ANNUAL REPORT**, a title that at once displayed the band's sense of humour and confounded critics and collectors alike. There's no way of knowing how many collectors wasted years of their lives in search of the first annual report. It was recorded on a Sony cassette recorder by necessity – years later, people would sit in recording studios trying to capture that "industrial" sound. The record was also limited to 785 copies, the exact number that the band could afford to produce, and released on their own Industrial records label. Limited edition records were unheard of at the time, but the lack of availability did nothing to kill the mystique that was growing around TG.

The CD release of **2nd ANNUAL REPORT** also contains the next Industrial Records release, a single containing the tracks **UNITED** and **ZYCLON B ZOMBIE**. In contrast to the electronic rumbling and industrial noise found on the album, these were almost commercial. In fact, **UNITED** was five years ahead of its time, having a Soft Cell electro-pop beat to it.

**D.O.A. – THE THIRD AND FINAL REPORT OF THROBBING GRISTLE** built on the band's reputation. It contained

four solo tracks, the disturbing **HAMBURGER LADY**, and **DEATH THREATS**, which was a couple of messages left on Orridge's answer-phone from people who didn't get the joke. The CD sleeve contains a photograph that will upset a lot of people.

These two CD's are included in the first boxed set, alongside **CD1**, a post TG release that takes in a long, uninterrupted improvisation that is quite excellent.

Just when people thought TG were becoming predictable in their death and destruction music came **20 JAZZ FUNK GREATS**, which had songs (shock horror) that were almost commercial! Almost...but not quite.

**HEATHEN EARTH** was a live album recorded in the studio with a selected audience of friends and colleagues. The CD also contains the single **ADRENALIN** and **SUBIUMAN**.

The final official TG release was the posthumous **MISSION OF DEAD SOULS**, a document of the final live performance in San Francisco. The show was also issued on video-tape. The CD has the singles **DISTANT DREAMS (PART 2)** and **SOMETHING CAME OVER ME** added.

I've deliberately avoided describing the music on each album. By its very nature, the music of TG is hard to explain to the uninitiated. It acts as a vehicle for the interests of the four members in expressing their art. It's a sound that feeds directly into you, using electronics that had been invented by Chris Carter, tape cut-ups and juxtaposition. It was DIY music in many ways, and it's easy to see why it inspired so many people to create their own work. Whether it be music, art collages, fanzines or video, the post TG generation knew that they could create without having access to expensive equipment.

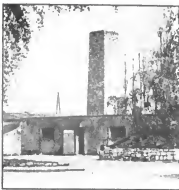
TG's work acts as a whole, not a series of individual pieces. Each album is a part of a master plan. Each live performance was as individual as any could be. TG recorded every one of their shows, and made them available on cassette, thus starting another trend. Now, people realised, you didn't even need the money to press records to have your work distributed. In the early Eighties, across the country people were taping their own work and selling it. For the price of a blank tape and a photocopied sleeve, you could sit on the shelves of Virgin Records. You didn't even need to have any musical instruments. For a while, anything seemed possible.

TG remained popular after their death. Even more so in fact, as more and more people discovered their work, as the music press finally realised that they'd been wrong to ignore them, or worse still were taken over by the TG generation. TG bootlegs were a common sight. The albums were reissued by Fetish, who also put out an instantly collectable box set, a limited edition natch.

In fact, the TG catalogue is so full of semi-official releases, limited editions and out-and-out bootlegs that I'd be surprised if even the band knew exactly what was out there.

Of course, it was TG live that was TG in essence. The live tapes were available in a box set called **TWENTY FOUR HOURS**. And maybe that should've been the end of it. But the continuing influence of the band, the undying love of their followers and the fascination of the curious has kept the myth alive. The antics of Genesis P. Orridge since the split made TG into something more than it was. The band that spawned The Sickest Man In Britain, the Satanic abusing madman seen on Channel Four. While Chris and Cosy went on to work together on a series of unique albums and Sleazy formed Coil, Gen was on a publicity overdrive, manipulating the media and

## MUSIC FROM THE DEATH FACTORY



### BY THROBBING GRISTLE

stirring up outrage for years until it all backfired so horribly with the **DISPATCHES** horror.

The release of the two TG CD box sets by The Grey Area of Mute (in lid ed. versions of course), alongside **THROBBING GRISTLE'S GREATEST HITS** (originally on vinyl from Rough Trade) has been followed by the four CD limited edition set of **THROBBING GRISTLE**

**LIVE**. With an average running time of seventy minutes each, these are something to get your teeth into. They contain the cream of the TG tapes, the finest moments in free-form insanity and camouflage chaos. A few of the cuts are familiar from the back catalogue; others remain a mystery until heard.

Volume one throws the listener in the deep end. **VERY FRIENDLY**, the first track, is a recreation of the murder of Edward Evans by Ian Brady and Myra Hindley. Like all good Mancunians, Orridge has a terminal fascination with the Moors Murders. Those who get past this track will find the remainder of the material here to be very much up to snuff.

This release is sure to further enhance the TG mythology. The band are as inaccessible now as they ever were, and therefore remain just as timely. This is music that will never date, simply because it will never achieve mass appeal. In another fifteen years time, people will still think of TG as either the greatest innovators in the history of music or as a mindfucking noise that is completely intolerable.

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# THE PLASTIC CABARET

*David Flint reports from Madame Valentine's fetish spectacular in Manchester...*

For too long now, anyone in search of fetishistic nightlife had to travel to London. While the SM scene in the capital expanded ever onwards, the rest of the country was left to look on helplessly. The nearest thing to fetish clubs, other than the rare excursion North of Watford by SKIN TWO, were gay and transvestite clubs, or – worse still – goth and metal venues, where at least the wearing of leather and rubber was accepted.

Thankfully, things have changed over the last year or so, and oddly enough, it's in Leeds that the action currently is. As well as being home to the now sadly deceased Glamour Pussy (reviewed last issue), Leeds has seen the imaginatively titled Fetish, the success of which is open to some debate, and – more significantly – is the home of

the Northern Association of Fantasy Fetishists, better known – unfortunately – as NAFF.

NAFF has been organising events in Manchester for some time now, but recently underwent a major shake-up, due to organiser John's dissatisfaction with the lack of life and vital energies in recent events. Rather than persevere with something that was dying on its feet, he took a six month break to figure out what needed to be done. By the beginning of this year, he was ready to return with a radically restructured event, and on February 13th, the top floor of The Victoria pub in Manchester City Centre played host to Madame Valentine's Plastic Cabaret.

The major problem with previous NAFF events seemed to be that there was nothing really happening; people dressed up, turned up and simply sat around chatting. Fine in itself, but hardly motivation to pay membership fees, admission and travel expenses. So, for this event, John abandoned the "make your own amusement" ethos, and went all out to entertain. This took two distinct shapes – live music from Mark And The Masochists(!) and fetishistic dance by Madame Valentine's Chain Gang.

The prospect of a good night pulled in a large crowd of devoted members and curious on-lookers, packing the room which had been half-empty at the last NAFF bash. This in itself helped create a livelier feeling than before, helped by a sense of anticipation amongst the attendees. Unfortunately, both the strength of the atmosphere and John's blood pressure were put to the test early on, as a full audio blow-out silenced the room the same minute that the doors opened. With only a ghetto blaster for music, it seemed as though everyone's worst nightmares had come true. However, in the true tradition of the theatre, a cry of "is there an electrician in the house?" went out...and amazingly enough, there was! So, after an hour or so, things returned to normal, and the evenings activities were set to begin.

The entertainment began with Mark And The Masochists (previously Mark And The Mistress, before said Mistress left). The band played Ramones and Cramps inspired punk-pop that was in the tradition of the Pub Band, i.e. hugely entertaining but – on sober reflection – nothing special. They were



technically good, and looked as though they were having fun, so who am I to complain? The audience seemed to appreciate them, which was just as well, as they were to return for several fifteen minute sets throughout the evening.

The act that most people wanted to see was the Chain Gang. This was two dancers, Marinda and Maria, who performed a variety of erotic tableaux. Their costumes, a splendid collection of straps and chains, had been created for the show by Liverpool's Hidebound, a company specialising in made-to-order bondage fashion. The act started with both girls entering, covered by capes, before Marinda went into an energetic solo dance routine, her blacked out eyes and chainmail studded clothes making her seem like a character





from some post-apocalypse Italian movie. In contrast to this, Maria performed a slow, seductive routine, miming and pouting as she straddled a chair in the middle of the stage.

Marinda then returned, cape around her shoulders, a studded mask over her face and

breasts held by thick leather and fine chain. She stalked around menacingly before leaving stage for the return of the band.

The next dance segment had Marinda challenging the politically correct by gyrating about in Nazi regalia and thigh-length boots – a most stirring performance! Both girls then engaged in a Mistress/Slave scenario, Maria leading Marinda on a leash, making her fellate the black strap-on around her waist, then lying her down to be whipped. This was the only actual performance piece of the night, the others being mere dance routines. This was unfortunate, as it was definitely erotic and highly entertaining. Hopefully, future events will have more dramatic activity.

Indeed, the remainder of the performances were variations on the dance routines, using a variety of excellent Hidebound creations.

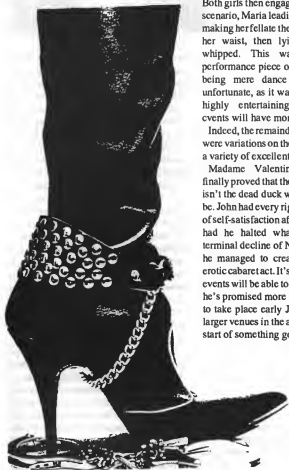
Madame Valentine's Plastic Cabaret finally proved that the Northern fetish scene isn't the dead duck we'd all feared it might be. John had every right to bathe in the glow of self-satisfaction after this event. Not only had he halted what seemed to be the terminal decline of NAFF, but in doing so, he managed to create a spectacular new erotic cabaret act. It's to be hoped that future events will be able to build on this. Already, he's promised more for the next event, due to take place early June. And with talk of larger venues in the air, this looks to be the start of something good.

*For more information about NAFF, write to: NAFF, P.O. Box HP50, Leeds, LS6 1TR.*

*We'll be profiling the wild work of Hidebound next issue. For more information, write to Hidebound, P.O. Box 10, Liverpool, L36 6LE.*



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# CINEMA AND RESPONSIBILITY: THE BAD LIEUTENANT

*Daniel Daran talks to Zoe Lund*

**T**HE BAD LIEUTENANT was shown at the Rotterdam Film festival as part of a retrospective on the work of Abel Ferrara. This also included **KING OF NEW YORK**, the pilot episode to the T.V. serial **CRIME STORY**, **CHINA GIRL** and the two cult favourites; **DRILLER KILLER** and **MS 45**. But **THE BAD LIEUTENANT** clearly stood out from the rest in its intensity, complexity of character and depth of vision. This was not just another exposition of visceral violence but a *Passion Play*, a chronicle of a soul at war with itself. Zoe Lund, who was a guest at the festival described the film as "A Christ story in a contemporary setting."

Lund acted in the film and co-wrote the script with Ferrara but she claims that it was altogether her story. She also co-directed several scenes and worked very closely with the actors. In fact the film seriously problematises the question of a film's authorship. Was **THE BAD LIEUTENANT** Lund's or Ferrara's film?

The central theme of the film deals with the possibility of self-overcoming in a dehumanising environment, with sin and redemption in a condition where all pre-established moral guidelines have collapsed and where life is always on the verge of disaster.

**THE BAD LIEUTENANT** (Harvey Keitel) is a New York cop addicted to drugs, gambling and the personal power conferred by his position. He has long ago succumbed to the pressures and temptations of life in the big city where the effort to cope and survive has become the paramount value. Murders and thefts, assaults and drug hauls are either ignored or turned into personal advantage. In fact there is only one issue pressing on the lieutenant's mind; where to find the money to pay off an escalating baseball debt. A debt that could cost him his life. The brutal gang rape of a nun and the reward offered by the church for the capture of the perpetrators offer the Lieutenant an expedient release from the grip of his situation or the means of salvation his soul so desperately needs.

The structure of the film focuses attention on the scene and its composition and never sacrifices this for the total continuity of narrative. The movement however, is neither random nor arbitrary but dependent



upon a kind of existential continuum. The narrative continuity reflects the inner movement within the Lieutenant so that we never lose sight of the real battleground, the Lieutenant's beleaguered heart.

The drugs and the sex may be seen as escape routes but in fact they are sites of almost unbearable confrontation. As Zoe Lund argues; "it is not the fact that he takes drugs that really matters but the way he takes them. To the Lieutenant the drugs provide an avenue for both transgression and transcendence." Magdalena (Zoe Lund) supplies the Lieutenant with heroin. Her monologue acts as a mirror to his condition. She initiates him and the audience into the mysteries. Magdalena is the High Priestess, evoking the fundamental role of the feminine as gateway to the turmoil of the soul and the sacramental experience.

**MAGDALENA:** "We got to eat away at ourselves. We got to eat our legs to get the energy to walk. We gotta come so we can go, we gotta suck ourselves off, we gotta eat away at ourselves so there is nothing left but appetite."

**ZOE LUND:** "In the sex scenes there is no real contact, no communion. There is voyeurism, sadism and masturbation, all indicating an alienated sexuality."

There are three sex scenes involving the Lieutenant. The first finds him with two

women involved with each other. In the opening shot he is off scene. Later he is seen gazing intently at the sexual play before him. His eventual participation takes the form of a dance, there is no actual penetration. But this is a dance of abjection, its self absorption culminates with the man confronting his own nakedness in a mirror. He is repelled by the sight and is reduced to tears. An image of regression, a child taking his first steps, not in joy but in pain.

In the second the Lieutenant is at the hospital where the clinical examination of the nun's ravaged body is taking place. She is lying under the glare of bright lights, vulnerable and exposed. The medical language is cold, dissection – an epilogue to the rape that is still going on, as anatomical inquisition and in the Lieutenant's dispassionate stare. He stands outside but looks in through a door that is left open. Open just enough to admit his gaze.

The third immediately follows the scene at the hospital. Here the Lieutenant threatens to arrest two women on the charge of driving without a license. The only way they can avoid arrest is to submit to his sexual demands. "Let me see your ass", he tells the one. The other is forced to imitate fellatio. He then masturbates to the sight of the women's humiliation. This scene is an appropriation of terrain previously solely



occupied by pornography.

**ZOE LUND:** "All the shots were taken in real time. Real time is crucial, it takes the audience deeper and prevents the possibility of escape. Whether the Lieutenant is injecting heroin into his veins or masturbating in the rain you are dragged in, whether you like it or not."

This however is not the case in the rape scene where rapid editing and an almost video clip effect depart from the harsh realism of the rest of the film. Here is an aestheticised violence, an eroticism that is deeply disturbing. This hypnotic treatment of the rape almost celebrates the perverse joy of transgression. The nun is voluptuous, her concealed sexuality is torn open whilst the frenzy of destruction shocks us into an awareness of the fragility of all that is sacred. Scene continuity tempts the audience to site the event within the mind of the Lieutenant. The rape of the nun...the rape of the soul...the torment of Christ on the cross.

The rape of the nun...the rape of the soul, symbol becomes event, event becomes symbol. The nun's confession of her failure to love, of her inability to sacrifice her pain to the agony of her assailants confronts the Lieutenant with the choice that leads to his death and redemption. Her forgiveness echoes Christ's; "Forgive them Father for they don't know what they do." And in answering the nun's call to prayer, in facing his Christ the Lieutenant embraces his sin and his salvation. This leap of faith marks the film's shift from the banal (as the inability to sacrifice) to the tragic.

**ZOE LUND:** "Death is not always beautiful, most of the time it is not. But what else can we call a death that involves a sacrifice of this kind."

A difficult problem confronting the film is that of adequate distribution. In the United States only four prints have been made. The censors gave it an X rating which means certain box office death, yet it is neither excessively violent nor sexually explicit. One thing is for certain, it is a demanding and unsettling film which defies an easy genre classification. It forces us to re-assess the divisions and categories through which we slot and interpret films and provides a space for new possibilities.

In discussion with Zoe Lund I felt that this project was indeed her baby. She is a deeply religious woman committed to a cinema of responsibility, a cinema that serves to awaken an ethical sensibility.

**ZOE LUND:** "The cinema is a temple. The silence, the darkness and the self emptying of the experience can serve as a

catalyst for change. After sharing the Lieutenant's experience the viewer can also ask of himself or herself the same questions. They can also commit themselves to the kind of action that is revolutionary in its essence. I place my emphasis on the quality of the single act and not necessarily on the results of that act. I mean, if we look at the Lieutenant's last act in terms of whether the two rapists will take the money and become revolutionaries themselves then we are missing the point completely. Redemption here is seen in terms of taking charge, of assuming responsibility for one's actions, of going beyond the limitations imposed by environment and the carving of fate into destiny. I am talking about a situation where the need to right wrong actions becomes an all consuming imperative.

"In America there is a lot of talk about consciousness raising but I am concerned in establishing a balance between conscience and consciousness. Consciousness is awareness and conscience a direct response to that awareness. A visceral need to enact justice. There are many metaphors in history, like the Christ story, which is a metaphor for political action. **THE BAD LIEUTENANT** explores this in the context of a modern

setting where the audience can identify. In this way the parameters of a revolutionary ontology are established. Literal renditions of the Christ story are not necessary. But the stories as they come down through millenia provide a distillation of the attempt at self-overcoming.

"Whilst in Rotterdam I made a little film where the protagonist (I played the role myself) goes to the Luxor theatre and desperately tries to buy a ticket to gain entry not into the cinema but into the world. The price of the ticket is a syringe full of blood. In the introduction to the film I wrote a caption which reads; 'That which is not yet but ought to be is more real than that which merely is.'"



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# PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED

## *The fine and the throwaway of recent print reviewed*

**T**he hippy dream of the late Sixties was already beginning to fade in 1969.

On August 8th that year, the final nail was hammered into the peace 'n' love coffin. It was on that night when – under the instructions of Charles Manson – Tex Watson, Sadie Glutz and Katie Krenwinkel were driven by Linda Kasabian to 10050 Cielo Drive, the residence of Roman Polanski and Sharon Tate. There, in an orgy of slaughter, Ms. Tate and others were butchered as part of Manson's crazed scheme for bringing about "Helter Skelter"...the uprising of black against white which he'd found out about through coded messages on the Beatles' **WHITE ALBUM**.

Much has been written about Manson since that time. He's passed from being mass murderer to modern cultural icon. Occult groups, murder junkies and general subversives see him as a prophet, a poet, and a fearless revolutionary. For Manson, who spent the years preceding the killings building up a devoted cult of followers, it must seem particularly gratifying. *The Family* is bigger than he could have hoped.

Of all the books written about (and by) Manson and his ragged band of drop-out worshippers, Ed Sanders' **THE FAMILY** remains the most exhaustive. Sanders was a part of the counter culture of the Sixties, being a member of psychedelic band The Fugs, Vietnam protester, underground book seller and associate of the family. On more than one occasion, he visited the family's Spahn Ranch hangout. He knew many of those involved, including Squeaky Fromme, who didn't participate in the killings and managed to keep her nose clean until 1975, when she aimed a gun at President Ford as an attempt to "help" Charlie.

Sanders tells the whole story of the family, seemingly missing nothing, no matter how trivial it might seem. Every detail is recorded, so that the reader might get as clear a picture as possible of what was going down during the transition from travelling hippies and petty thieves to kill-crazy psychos. Sanders tells how the family expanded, adding under-age runaways and middle-class kids with credit-cards to burn to its ranks. How Charlie became obsessed with the idea of The Hole a secret entrance to a subterranean wonderland where the family would hide out during Helter Skelter and then emerge to conquer the black



Jim Van Bebber's **CHARLIE'S FAMILY**  
– from **THE FAMILY**

victors and rule supreme. The book details how Manson wormed his way into the lives of Beach Boys drummer Dennis Wilson and his associates in the music business – an association that culminated in the **LIE** album. Sanders tells of the family's home movies, some shot on a stolen NBC TV video camera. There are claims that alongside home made porno tapes, there were films of animal and human sacrifice – real snuff movies, there for the asking. There are those who claim to have seen these snufflers, but as always, nobody has produced concrete proof of their existence. Knowing their fascination with filming, it's hard to believe that the family *wouldn't* have made such atrocities, and somebody must have 'em stashed safely away until the time is right (John Aes Nihil "recreated" these films for his underground shocker **MANSON FAMILY MOVIES**, so death trippers can always suspend their disbelief and pretend it's the real thing).

The strength of Sanders' writing is his eye for the trivial which later seems important, and his cynicism. Sanders is no Manson groupie, hailing the great Charlie as the martyr of the age. He sees Manson as half shyster, half loon...all bad. As Manson gathered together his increasingly deadly band of followers, so Sanders reflects on the growing insanity, the cancer at the heart of the innocent hippy commune. Manson doesn't come out of this book well, and that's probably why Charlie hates it so

much. Unlike Vincent Bugliosi, the prosecutor who wrote **HELTER SKELTER**, Sanders came from the generation which supplied Manson with his girdles and ghoulics, and which was encouraged to see the trial as a set-up by the authorities. Sanders was young and hip and should've been Charlie's buddy. Instead, he wrote **THE FAMILY**. Can't rely on anyone these days, huh?

After being out of print for years, **THE FAMILY** has been reprinted by Nemesis Books in a revised edition. Unlike some revisions, which are hard to separate from the original, this offers an entirely new section of five chapters and one hundred and seven pages. While the original book ended as the trial was about to begin, the new version takes us through the bizarre and often farcical court proceedings, and tracks what has happened to the protagonists since, up until 1989. Sanders catalogues Manson's rise to media celebrity, through his frequent TV appearances, and tells of the efforts of Doris Tate – Sharon's mother – to ensure that the family stay behind bars. It's here that Squeaky Fromme's ill-considered "assassination attempt" (a stunt that earned her a life sentence) is discussed.

**THE FAMILY** is the only Manson book that you *need*, the rest are simply filler. Sanders, in his tireless research and frantic, savage, breathless style, has created a dark vision of drug inspired madness, blood hungry fanaticism and overwhelming hate

which is as unbelievable and shocking as it was at the time. It brings you face to face with hell, and it's comin' down fast...

In the mid-Seventies, hard-core porn still had some drive and ambition. There were still X-rated theatres for the films to be shown in, still an audience that demanded more than just wall-to-wall fuck 'n' suck. And there were people working in the industry who wanted to produce something special, something that stood out. Enter Alberto Ferro, aka Lasse Braun.

Ferro was a renegade Italian pornographer whose 8mm loops were regarded as the finest around. He'd already made one feature film, the semi-documentary **FRENCH BLUE**, and in 1975, he created the finest hard-core movie ever made: **SENSATIONS**. With a production cost of \$500,000 and shot on 35mm, **SENSATIONS** brought together the hottest sex icons in the world for a lust-driven hedonistic assault on the senses. The film was magnificent – the ultimate experience in screen sex. It played to packed houses at the Cannes Film Festival and became the only European porn film to be a success in America.

At the time of the film's production, one of the stars, Tuppy Owens (better known for her **SEX MANIACS DIARY**), was asked to write a novel based around the film. This she did, but the finished book remained unpublished...until now. Finally, **THE MAKING OF SENSATIONS** has been made available in the United States by Rhinoceros Books.

As the title suggests, this isn't simply a novelization of the film, but neither is it a straight-forward documentation of the behind-the-scenes activities. Rather, it's a unique mix of the two. Tuppy has taken the facts surrounding the making of the film and turned them into a raunchy sex story. Interwoven with this are lengthy, detailed accounts of each moment in the film itself, often expanded beyond what was finally shown on screen. It's a fascinating story of rampant lust, delirious inspiration and celluloid madness. As out-and-out pornographic writing, it works extremely well. The sex is raw, graphic and extremely horny. As a look at the world of Alberto Ferro and his stars, the book is utterly fascinating. It's not often that we get to peek backstage on a porn film, much less one as masterful as **SENSATIONS**, and much of the enjoyment to be had from the book comes from its evocative recreation of the madness and excitement surrounding the whole production.

We'll have more on Tuppy and more on **SENSATIONS** in future issues. While

you're waiting, research the facts with this steamy tome. Whether you loved the movie and want to relive the glory, or haven't seen it and wonder what all the fuss is about, **THE MAKING OF SENSATIONS** is a fine piece of work. Import copies should be trickling through by the time you read this. Are you prepared?

Of course, Tuppy Owens is part of a British minority. She likes sex. This is a distinctly un-British attitude. Sex in this country has been the subject of repression. Paranoia and misinformation for over one hundred years. The story of this century's attitudes to the most natural function in the world is told in Paul Ferris' excellent new book. **SEX AND THE BRITISH**. This is the latest in a long line of books appearing recently about the national obsession. For although the Brits fear sex, they also find it compulsive. And if you think it's bad now, be thankful you weren't around at the turn of the century. Ferris tells the story of sexual

awakening in the UK, and it's a sorry tale indeed. The repression of contraception, abortion, information about basic functions and worse – it's all here. It's been a long, slow fight to get to where we are now, and there are those who would like us to go back to the old days of ignorance and fear. Ferris' book is a timely reminder about why we must never give up the fight for liberty. **SEX AND THE BRITISH** is published by Michael Joseph.

**REDEEMER** is the new magazine from Mr Redemption Films, Nigel Wingrove, and has the same high-class visual impact as his video series. The first issue is pretty impressive, though it must be said that apart from the contributions by **UNGAWA** head honcho Cathal Tohill and Pete Tombs, the text tends to be somewhat lightweight. However, I'm assured that issue two will be considerably meatier in content. What can't be faulted are the illustrations. Rather than use movie stills, Wingrove fills his



**REDEEMER** –  
all in the best possible taste

magazine with original photography that reflects his particular tastes – naked nuns, blood gorged vampire queens, Uzi toting girls in Chanel gear...it's a combination that'll take a while to get used to, but it's certainly revolutionary and intriguing. In any case, as first issues go, this is better than most. **REDEEMER** is the most significant prozine to emerge for some time, and it'll go from strength to strength. The second edition is due out any time; write to Redeemer, BCM Box 9235, London WC1N 3XX.

Sick, sick, sick...it's a tasty world, and **HENRY 157** sinks its teeth in and bites itself off a bloody chunk. Calling itself "The Death Journal" – and I'm not about to argue – this cheery magazine tells it like it is about the end of the line. Issue two digs up the Kool-Aid infested bones of Rev. Jim Jones and his devoted followers, and as we wait for David Koresh to put up or shut up, it makes edifying reading. Around this is a bunch of enthusiastic writing about violent demise (sorry, this mag ain't interested in natural causes!) and some pix that'll get the gag reflex limbering up. But don't get the wrong impression – editor Damien Drake is actually a well adjusted young chap, and his editorial makes his stand clear: this isn't another Charles Manson fan club offering. As he points out, most killers are sad bastards who you wouldn't give the time of day to normally. Damien doesn't pollute his cover with anything as capitalistic as a price, so it's an SAE to Dept 157, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG, and quick about it...

If you feel that there must be more to look forward to than mass murder then **BLACK ICE** might be your thing. It bears an uncanny (and unwelcome) physical resemblance to **I-D** of all things, and is concerned with all manner of hi-tech nonsense like Virtual Reality, smart drugs (a major contradiction in terms, but never mind) and cyber-punk, none of which exactly fill me with enthusiasm, but hey, let's not be a new age party pooper...those of you with an eye for techno-developments will go a bundle on this. It's well written (apart from the clumsy Godzilla piece by Greg Lamb) and maintains a fair level of "hmm. what's that?" for the luddite fraternity. Hell, it's better than **MONDO 2000**. Mail order copies are £4.50 from P.O. Box 1069, Brighton BN2 4YT.

Adrian Smith's **DELIRIUM** is in the same school as Simon (no relation) Smith's legendary **BOOK OF THE DEAD**, in that it's aimed at the seeker of technical information rather than those in search of critical comment. Or, to put it another way

-this is an exhaustive listing of Italian exploitation flicks from 1970 to 1974, with alternative titles, running times, cast and crew details, and pretty much everything else you ever wanted to know but were afraid to ask about Slezee, Italian style. Critical comments are brief, but generally effective, the layout is pleasantly uncluttered, and there are a wealth of rare and raucous ad-mats and stills to make your eyes (if nothing else) bulge. Of course, it's for specialist tastes only, but those of you with such tastes should send £2.75 immediately to Media Publications, 26 Salford Road, Old Marston, Oxford, OX3 0RY.

**NECRONOMICON** is the latest horror fanzine to hit the streets (or at least letter boxes), while I'm still unconvinced that the world needs any more of these things, this isn't too bad. Although edited by a sometime **SAMHAIN** scribe, the mag has a clear and coherent design, and never seems to overstep its self-determined limitations. So, we have stuff on **BRIDES OF DRACULA**, **THE LIVING DEAD AT MANCHESTER MORGUE**, **MURDER BY DECREE**, **FACES OF DEATH** and the Traci Lords porn classic **LOVE BITES**, together with an unintentionally hilarious interview with the head of **VIPCO** video ("we're hopeful for [a video release of] **THE NEW YORK RIPPER**" being one quote which caused much mirth amongst the **DIVINITY** staff). On the whole, not too bad. Blood groupies will want to send £2.00 to Andy Black, 15 Jubilee Road, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 1LB.

Another **SAMHAIN** renegade to have gone it alone is John Martin, whose **GIALLO PAGES** is thankfully better than the horribly punning title might suggest. There are interviews with that little Argento fellow, mad Lucio Fulci and sort-of-cult star David Warbeck, along with coverage of Italian movie sex queen Edwige Fenech and the latest emission from the director of the dismal **CARUNCULA**, alongside the usual batch of reviews. As the more astute reader may have figured out by now, the whole magazine is yet another devoted to "exploitation all'Italiana", and as such it's a pretty good first effort, despite the fact that John and I don't share the same opinions on very much (his woefully misguided slagging off of Cronenberg's wondrous **NAKED LUNCH**, his dismissal of **MONDO CANE** and defence of Chas Balun – the moronic cretin responsible for the bufoonish **DEEP RED** magazine and offshoots – being the main bones of contention to be picked at some later date).

But enthusiasts for pasta shockers will find this to be a satisfactory experience. Copies can be obtained from "Giallo Pages" c/o On-Line Publishing, c/o 33 Maltby Road, Mansfield, Nottingham, NG18 3BN for £2.50.

Those of you who recall the Olympia Press, those renegade publishers of erotica from decades gone by, might be surprised to discover that they are now based on the Isle of Wight, and churning out books with wild abandon. Don't believe everything you read though – this Olympia Press International has no connection with it's legendary namesake. They publish **PLEASURE BOUND INTERNATIONAL** ("the bondage magazine for enthusiasts by enthusiasts") and the New Year Special has found its way here. It's a well-produced magazine, as indeed it should be for a hefty £12.00. The photography is reasonable, with young (and not-so-young) women being trussed up in consensual suspension, while the fiction is pretty dire. There are pages of contacts, a fair number of reader letters (and photos) and lots of ads. What else can I say? It's reasonable of its type, and has no real UK competition at the moment.



## PLEASURE BOUND INTERNATIONAL

Olympia Press International also publish bondage/CP novels, and I would imagine that the sample I received is fairly typical, **A WELL MATCHED PAIR**, written by George Holland, tells the story of the (almost certainly fictional) author's marriage to Lucy, who is in need of punishment from both her husband and

mother at regular intervals. There are all the elements that you'd expect - extensive buttock paddling, ass-fucking and general rampant sex from all involved. I can't honestly say I found it particularly engaging - the writing is rather average and the descriptions of the action too artificial, despite the obvious enthusiasm. Maybe I'm too fussy in my erotica, but I'd prefer phrases like "fingered her hairy little fanny", "spurred great sticky globs of spunk" and "smooth cool bare bumcheeks" (all culled from the same randomly selected page) to be left in the schoolyard. Novelists should be capable of describing things more effectively.

All that said, the novel will certainly have appeal to those of you who like to read about female subjugation and don't give a fig about art. Me. I'd like to see other Olympia output. Until then, I'll reserve comment on the company as a whole. Mail order details can be obtained from Olympia Press International Ltd, Caxton House, Old Station Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38 1DX.

Belgium seems to be the capital of European fetishism. The latest addition to their flourishing scene is **SENTIMENT MODERNE**, which is a nice glossy affair. There are interviews with scene members, porno video reviews, bondage fashion spreads, a piece on shoe-worship, and plenty of news and contacts. If you like **SECRET**, then this should appeal to you. See the ad elsewhere for more details.

More Euro-fetishism can be found in "No. 0" of **OFFRANDE** from France. As the issue number might suggest, this is more of a test edition than the real thing, and therefore should be judged accordingly. Its sixteen pages have interviews with a bondage model and Deborah Jaffe, features on Richard Kern and Aleister Crowley and assorted bits of news, presented in a form that bodes well for the actual magazine to come. My grip of French is loose enough for me to be unable to comment on the quality of writing, of course...write to A.P.M.C. "Offrande", B.P. No.6 75462 Paris Cedex 10, France, for more information.

You may recall my reviewing Tim Greaves' **YUTTE STENSGAARD: A PICTORIAL SOUVENIR** a few issues back. Now, Tim is back with two new instalments in his ongoing crusade to highlight the sexy starlets of British cinema. The first is a direct sequel to the earlier volume. **YUTTE STENSGAARD: MEMORIES OF A VAMPIRE** follows the same photo-book format of its

predecessor, but this time adds personal recollections from those who knew or worked with her. More interestingly, it also publishes a large selection of private photos that were supplied to Tim by her family, who were somewhat less reticent to see her glorious past revived than the lady herself.

The second booklet is **MADELINE SMITH: A CELLULOID RETROSPECTIVE**, and deals with the career of the angelic looking star of **THE VAMPIRE LOVERS**, **UP POMPEII**, **FRANKENSTEIN** AND **THE MONSTER FROM HELL** and numerous other classic titles. Thankfully, Ms. Smith is far less reluctant to discuss her work than Ms. Stensgaard, and Tim runs a thorough interview alongside the expected wealth of rare pix.

Both books are produced to a high standard and thankfully manage to stop well short of being droolingly obsessive. Lap them up for £1.95 each from Tim at 118 High Street, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO5 5LR.

I suppose I should mention the existence of **DECADENCE**, if only to warn potential readers and note its imminent passing. Although possessing a great title, interesting covers and featuring potentially fascinating subjects, the magazine is a dismal failure on almost every level. The articles of interest (the joys of pissing, Jim Rose interview) are lost in a sea of awful "erotica", dreadful soft porn photo-sets and general rubbish. It comes across as though someone had seen **DIVINITY**, **SKIN TWO** and assorted girlie mags and thrown them all together in the hope of appearing original. One day, a mainstream publisher is going to effectively rip off the underground. Until then, we'll keep scoffing.

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# TURNING A DRAMA INTO A CRYISIS

The perils of no-budget film-making discovered by **David Flint**

When the prize-winners and prize-givers at the recent BAFTA backslapping session lamented the lack of British film product, they had a point, although they of course failed to acknowledge the role that the inbuilt elitism of the UK film industry has played in this dismal state of affairs. But while they wrung their hands at the sad lack of British made film, they failed to take into account the increasing number of low budget material being made on video. I'm not just talking

about **ELECTRIC BLUE** or **FIONA COOPER** here – though the soft porn market is by far the biggest part of the British film business – but the underground movies that are appearing with increasing frequency, many of which have been covered by **DIVINITY**. It's here where the action is, with devoted film-makers working feverishly away with minimalist budgets and maximum talent, and occasionally producing a little gem. The work of Richard Baylor or Damon Barr and

Marie-Anne Ferral are prime examples of talent and imagination overcoming assorted restrictions. **CRYSIS** is another.

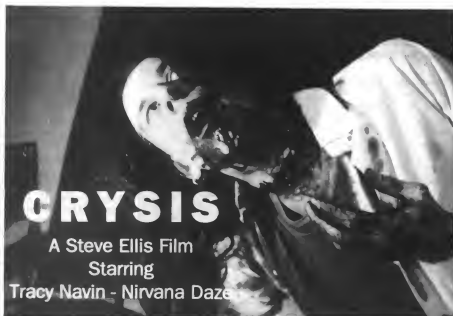
Located in Manchester, **CRYSIS** is a twenty-two minute psycho-erotic horror tale. Nirvana Daze plays a young man who walks his new girlfriend (Tracy Navin) home after a night out in one of the city's numerous lousy nightclubs. After a bit of persuasion, she invites the horny and frustrated Daze in for a hot chocolate, only to find that she's out of milk. He heads off the local shop for a fresh supply, and returns to find her stripped to her underwear and ready for action. After much naked grappling, Daze is left on the bed, his hands tied together, while Navin leaves the room. He begins to grow increasingly disturbed at her absence and his incapacitation, a disturbance which grows considerably when a man which his throat ripped open crawls towards him gasping "she killed me... she'll kill you too!" To say more would ruin any plot suspense; suffice to say that all is not what it seems.

The notable thing about **CRYSIS** – other than the surprising amount of nudity in the sex scenes and the welcome restraint shown in the gore quota – is its technical quality. Although the dialogue is sometimes muffled, the camerawork and editing are excellent, as is the music by Xen. The story by Ken Miller is fairly basic, but holds together well, and the acting, by and large, is pretty good.

**CRYSIS** made its debut during the recent **FILM EXTREMES** festival at London's Scala, where it was shown alongside a strange mix of mainstream and underground movies like Richard Baylor's **JESUS HATES YOU**, **DUST DEVIL** and Hugh Gallagher's sleazy **GOROTICA**. A few days after this baptism of fire, I talked to director Steve Ellis and his two stars in the underground cafe of Manchester's Corn Exchange building, and asked him how he came to make the film.

"It's something I've always threatened to do. In the past, I've made a few short things like pop videos, but I've never had time for anything bigger. Ken Miller had always been sending me scripts. They dried up around 1988, but I was tidying cupboards and came across a few. I'd just lost my job – I was working in video production – so I found a script which I thought would be manageable. It was set in one location, it





had a neat story with a neat twist at the end, and I decided to give it a go."

Calling up friends like make-up effects technician Dave Fitzgerald and music composer Xen, Ellis soon had the core of his crew sorted out, and had to face the real problem - finding a cast. The male lead was fairly straightforward. Nirvana Daze was an old friend and acted as the film's associate producer. "It was something that we'd talked about for a long time", he explains.

The hard part came when looking for a girl to play the lead role.

"Initially we just looked around", explains Ellis. "We spotted this Spanish girl who looked sensational and we approached her. I showed her Ken's original script, which kind of brushed over the sex scene, but she knew there was one, and she said 'I'd love to do it'. She had this Spanish accent, she sounded great, she had an unusual name...I knew she'd put a few bums on seats if she took her clothes off", he laughs.

So, problem solved...or was it?

"While I was doing the storyboarding, she was the one all the way. The we came to a crunch meeting where I went through the adapted script and I actually went into detail about the sex scene...and I saw her fidgeting in the corner at the 'groping-of-the-breasts'. I thought 'Christ, wait until what's coming next!'

"Her first reaction was 'I don't want his hands on me'. She said 'If you tie him up, then I'll probably do it'. We said okay, actually that's a good idea. That's how that got into the script. But she wanted to think about it for forty-eight hours...she was

worried about her parents getting a copy. Eventually, she didn't get in touch, and we had five days to find somebody else."

"We were on the verge of scrapping the idea of making it to have a chance of being shown at the Scala", adds Nirvana. "Time was a massive problem."

With his worst nightmares coming true, Ellis rushed around to see Steve Ellison, legendary proprietor of Steve's World Famous Movie Store, located at the heart of Manchester's increasingly bizarre Corn Exchange. Ellison went to work on his contacts, and against the odds, came up with Tracy Navin.

"I was asked if I wanted to be in a horror movie and I just said yeah, because I wasn't doing anything at the time and I was bored", Tracy explains. "I just did it for a laugh really, I didn't know what a can of worms I'd opened."

Steve Ellis elaborates. "She was the first girl that came. I actually said 'there is a sex scene in it, how do you feel about that?', and her first reaction was 'as long as it's not hard-core, I'm game'."

So, with his cast finally intact, Ellis began production on a budget of just £300 and a schedule of just two weeks.

"It would've cost a lot more if we'd had to pay the effects guy and the music people, but they've done it for nothing. The main cost was in video stock and editing time, and if you use council-run places that are subsidised, you can get that done cheaply."

The now-notorious sex scene was one of the first to be shot. For both cast and director, it was a nervous moment.

"Before the day, Tracy said to me that she was just going to go for it", comments Ellis. "I said 'I'd show some restraint.'"

Once filming began, though, inhibitions were swept aside by the sheer monotony of movie making.

"The last thing you're thinking about is sex really" says Tracy. "If I'd sat and thought about it, I would have lost my bottle. It was just like 'let's do it and get it out of the way'".

"We didn't really have time to think about it", agrees Nirvana, adding that "from a male point of view, more questions are directed at me, simply because of the fact that there can always be a 'problem' with the male side of things."

Once out of the way though, all involved realised that it wasn't so bad, and now feel ready for anything. Tracy explains:

"I can't bear to watch it. I just sit and cringe. But now that I've done that, I could do anything on screen."

Nirvana nods in agreement. "When I first did it, I thought 'this isn't how I want people to see me'. But it's the sheer buzz of the shock. I mean, my mother hasn't seen me like that since I was eight years old."

Steve Ellis too admits that he'd be willing to take more risks next time.

"It could have gone further", he admits. "She was quite willing, and some of the out-takes are quite explicit in showing parts of her body. But I wanted the film to have a certain style to it, rather than fall into that hard-core/hard-gore mould, but still have enough in there to tantalise. If I were to do it again, I'd be a bit more risqué. But it's a

first project, and I think we were brave to do what we did."

"That's what people want to see these days", Tracy sighs. "They want to see people getting killed and people getting fucked."

Preferably at the same time, I comment.

Aside from first night nerves over the sex scene, the filming of **CRYSIS** was surprisingly straight-forward.

"I couldn't believe how smoothly it went", Ellis says in wonderment. The effects worked, people turned up on time and we got it shot on schedule. Where I came into problems was on post-production. We got crackling all over the dialogue, so I had to re-edit all the dialogue again and get it finished by March 20th."

So what now? You have your film, you've shown it at Britain's favourite cult cinema, what next?

"I've no great plans for this one", says Ellis. "I'm aware I can do a lot better. I'm



all photographs © Steve Ellis

not totally satisfied with it, but it's a good start. Because we've left the story open, we're gonna make a sequel, and do it as it should've been done."

Nirvana concurs. "Obviously, the next project will have more people brought in. Personally, I'll probably take a backward step. I'll work more behind-the-scenes and have a smaller part."

"Although it stands well against other low budget movies, this was only made on VHS", explains Ellis. "We worked a lot on the lighting to give it some sort of 'look', but for the next one I want to move up to Hi-8, and get a professional sound-recorderist in as well. Then I'll bury the **CRYSIS** project, and for the third project this year, I want to move onto 16mm."

*To see a copy of **CRYSIS** and to find out more about Steve's next film, write to:*

*Steve Ellis  
21 Canberra St., Clayton  
Manchester M11 4NL*



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# IDEAL HOME SHOW?

The world of domestic interiors for the S&M enthusiast explored by **Mark Day**

While the mainstream media continues to binge on fetish fashion and couture, a little pervy-cred goes a long way for assorted minor league celebrities and hopeless pop dorks (step forward Mike Edwards of Jesus Jones for starters). But while confessing to having a little rubber number in the wardrobe gives an air of knowing decadence to any celeb, who'd be publicity-hungry enough to own up to a whipping-frame in the cupboard under the stairs? Well, O.K., other than Madonna?

Clothes may be the corner-stone of fetish-consumerism, but they're only it's most visible manifestation. Beneath that rubbery tip of the iceberg lurks an understandably anonymous sub-culture, the history of which is often too fragmented to record in any great detail. There are a small band of dedicated, though uncelebrated, craftsmen out there; quietly translating flights of restraint-fixed fantasies into three dimensional reality. The demand is there, even if it's no one's shouting very loudly about it. After all, if clothes maketh the man, furniture plays its own part in conferring status. Positions of dominance and submission have long been played out around the theatre of furniture – think of thrones, church altars, the Speaker's chair and benches of Parliament. Not forgetting the structures of subjugation gallows, electric chairs, church pews and the stakes where witches once burned.

So, welcome to a world where "functional-furniture" isn't just some minimalist, Scandinavian pine effort you picked up at Ikea, as we go beyond the valley of the MFI flat pack.

Warren Davies claims that the "S&M" in his company name stands for Shropshire & Midland Fabrications. Yeah, right, sure thing, Warren.

He credits SUNDAY SPORT for kick-starting his career. Appalled at the high prices and low quality of what was on offer in a catalogue of bondage equipment ordered from the SPORT's small-ads, he decided he could do better himself.

"I come from an engineering background, so I approach everything from an engineering point of view. But it's not so much a career as something I'm into," he admits, explaining that his customers seem to prefer it that way.

His speciality is customized beds. The standard adaptation is a "solid based bed, with tie-loops at each corner, half way along each side and at the top and bottom. We also do custom headboards, because a lot of people like to use them, in welded steel or wood. We do ten different headboards, or you can design your own. The beds come with a ten-year guarantee and you could park a car on them."

His business extends to, "basic stocks, pillories, flogging ladders – very popular and cheap – and one of my best sellers is actually cages."

Unlike some of his contemporaries, he isn't particularly bothered by the unsuitable styles favoured by his customers.

"I specialize in out-and-out bondage type furniture. Maybe that's a little bit heavy for some people, but it doesn't occur to me like that. As long as everybody consents to what's going on, then fine." Do people list this stuff on their home contents insurance policy? "I very much doubt it! One customer asked me to do a dungeon for them and – luckily it happened before I started – their cellar flooded. I could just imagine the look on the plumber's face when he came round."

Understandably, potential customers are concerned about privacy.

"Obviously after the stuff's dispatched and signed for, the names and addresses are destroyed. But I think the biggest reassurance is when I state that I'm into the scene as well. There seems to be quite a bit of surprise when I say that."

A qualified draftsman, Ian King was inspired by a PENTHOUSE profile on eccentric British "sex machine constructor" Hildebrand, who created inventive and surreal devices for "connoisseurs of idiosyncratic sexual gratification. Sensing a vocation along similar lines, King placed an advertisement in FIESTA offering "specialist equipment made to design" and awaited the response.

One of his first commissions was a chastity belt for a man in the RAF ("obviously I can't mention his name") though he confides "I'm not over keen on chastity belts. They take ages to make and they're not very cost effective."

On the furniture front, he says "the recession's hit me. People who used to have a few bob to spare for what is quite

complicated furniture, don't seem to have that few hundred left for their playrooms any more."

As a personal preference, King goes for more complex jobs.

"I did do quite a good thing for a professional lady – I think 'sex therapist' is the in-term at the moment," he laughs.

"She had to suspend people but couldn't use the ceiling, because it was a suspended one. I built her a hydraulic wall crane, which folds into the wall. It could easily pick up anyone up to twenty, twenty-five stone just by pumping a handle. I also modified quite a lot of stuff that already existed in her dungeon."

For King, there's no such thing as off-the-peg work.

"Say a customer wants a pillory – do you want padding? How tall do you want it? What finish would you like? Hardwood or softwood? Stained or varnished? People can be vague – they haven't considered the problems of mounting something to the floor. Or if they want it to be hidden away, that adds extra problems as far as being able to break it down to put it in a cupboard or whatever. But complexity isn't a problem, though I have to charge accordingly."

Inevitably, safety is a major consideration.

"I have had requests for things which I won't make, because a failure in a component part could have been quite catastrophic in terms of injury. One was a very complicated clockwork mechanism that raised a dildo as weight was transferred from foot to foot. I said I'd have to do it differently, and the customer got quite upset! But I'm a chartered engineer, and I have to take into account loads and stresses. In particular anything involving suspension – all the fittings I use are way over the top in terms of strength."

Kelvin Branagh, of Eroteam, came into the S&M area as, "just a skint furniture maker with a liberal mind. My first work was to a customer's specifications. Since then I've been finding out more and more because I really didn't know a lot about the S&M scene. I suppose some of it has surprised me, but it's been very enjoyable."

As well as "usability and comfort" considerations, he echos the importance of safety.

"Once you get onto suspension, things can go wrong, which is why we have to test

everything." Where do you draw the line? "I try to work along the lines of 'if you can think of it, we can make it', but if I can't make exactly what the customer wants, I'll try to persuade them to try something different. I haven't had any complaints."

Though a smaller market than the one for fetish clothing, this is a serious one.

"This isn't so much a throwaway area as clothing," Branagh says. "It's a permanent thing. If you're going to pay a thousand pounds for furniture you're not going to chuck it away next season."

He admits that unobtrusive bondage work makes up the bulk of the market.

"I'd envisaged erotic furniture, like a normal bed with just a few attachments to it. But doing the jobs for my customers, I've found out they want serious bondage stuff. Of course, the feel of the item has to match the atmosphere and the ambience of the time that you're using it."

Describing himself as "a well established and successful furniture maker in my own right," Mr. B. of T.F.M. Ltd. believes that his pieces are more experimental and unusual than what he sees as S&M-scene stereotypes.

"The S&M business is still very much in its infancy. It's got a long way to go and there are a lot of avenues unexplored. I'm exploring one of them with my furniture.

Or at least trying to... Unfortunately, first and foremost I'm a businessman, so I do what people want me to do," he explains.

"You have to put the fantasy in front of the person, or they don't respond to it. Unfortunately the fantasy does tend to revolve around big bits of pine with chunks cut out of it, stained black, made in someone's shed. I'm trying to get away from that. But a lot of people are stuck on pine and black paint and that's fine one of the first things I did was a twelve foot tall St. Andrew's cross for the Sex Maniac's Ball."

He moved into this field after, as he puts it, "looking around and seeing what was available and frankly being rather appalled by the lack of imagination from both sides - makers and users!"

He adds, "I think S&M is fun. Playing games like this is relaxing for a person. It lets the barriers down, you learn more about yourself and the person you're with. But some go a lot further. It can become quite an obsessive thing, which I feel rather concerned about. On one side I would like more people to get involved, but on the other, not to go too far."

Mr. B recently completed some work for El Chalet, a Spanish S&M-themed hotel.

"They ordered a rack. A wonderful design, because it fits in the boot of a car, then it

folds out to ten foot long. It's made in mahogany and I had a lot of fun making that, there's some very skilled work in it. Frankly, it was very complicated - the body section is only thirty inches long, which means your head is unsupported, so I had to include in the design a pull-out headrest."

Mr. B. and his contemporaries challenge the basic assumptions most people make about home furnishings. He says, "people don't really look on furniture as anything other than something you sit on. Most people don't even look at it once they've bought it. I'm trying to get people to do just that."

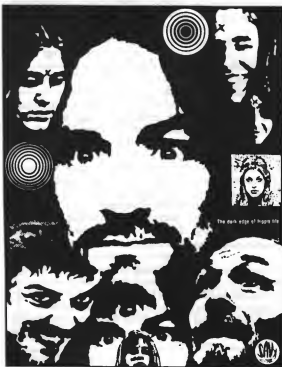
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Mr. B. T.F.M. Co., 88 Chaple St., Tiverton, Devon EX16 6BU.



They were children of the '60's. Of free love and psychedelia. Of a better world waiting to be born. But in Charles Manson, they found a daddy, a lover and a saviour... All they needed was his word, to ignite the violence within them, and to end the love generation in a tragic rampage of murder and hate.

#### "THE FAMILY"

(revised and updated edition)

by Ed Sanders

(ISBN 1 897743 15 7 - 512 pages - £9.99)

is published by Nemesis on March 18, as an illustrated film tie-in, much anticipated by Crime and Movie fans. Extended to the present day, this classic case history tells the only complete story of the Manson family. The new Nemesis edition contains many rare stills which illustrate key scenes from the text - most taken from the eagerly awaited new film, CHARLIE'S FAMILY, the preview trailer of which has been thrilling audiences at Cult Movie festivals. The film's director, JIM VAN BEBBER, contributes an introduction which explains why THE FAMILY is the only truly invaluable book for anyone who wants to explore the bizarre case of Charles Manson and his "family".

"Ed Sanders has done nothing less than risk his own life... It is only fitting that such a risk should produce such a terrifying book!"

THE NEW YORK TIMES

# MADE IN HEAVEN

## *Sal Volatile reels in shock at the work of the world's most important artist, Jeff Koons*

Quite the kinkiest exhibition thrown up on the London gallery circuit last year came at the Anthony d'Offay space in September and October. Devoted to exploring "the venter of wholesomeness we take for granted at the heart of middle class life", **STRANGE DEVELOPMENTS** launched some preposterous new works by Jeff Koons which could have significant impact on what is allowed to be graphically portrayed sexually in this country.

Koons, the hi-roller NYC art svengali who married Cicciolina and made a million, has done for modern art what Malcolm McLaren once did for contemporary music – made it choke on its own vomit.

Koons' stalking grounds are the vast, kitsch territories of art-life and sexual fantasy. He specialises in full-gloss confrontational tack. His avowed aim is sales and more sales. Alongside Madonna, Koons represents a new kind of big-spender porn spectacular. Koons with his obscene wool-pulling antics; Madonna taking the role of the all-round entertainer introducing her public to new lines of staged "deviance".



**WOLFMAN (CLOSE-UP), 1991**

Madonna is rapidly converging on the virile, obscene intent of Cicciolina anyway. But most important is this general

circulation of pornographic intent throughout so many of the withered moral by-ways of America – a deep pink fusing over the crinkling, plastic sculpted flesh of that disintegrating nation.

Koons is of course at the forefront of this movement. His marriage to Cicciolina is the perfect high-art harmony of cunt, commerce and cock. Here he presents two works, both huge square eight foot by eight foot colour photo-panels of himself fucking his wife. It's an absurdly simple but effective idea. At just what point does the deliberate, explicit representation of human copulation pass from the sleazy realms of vulgar populist porno into the hushed capital-intensive world of the trading art-market?

It's an age old question. But if the authorities are able to pass these sorts of works for uninhibited public display in Britain, then it seems possible that they may be on the verge of giving up the battle on the magazine/book/video front.

In the first picture, Koons mounts Cicciolina, photographed from the back. Koons' heavily hung balls figure large as his meathook is just about to pull out of those mythic female parts, known intimately to fans throughout Europe! In the second, a smiling Koons lies back as his spouse gorges his organ into her spectacularly splayed anus. As is only fit and proper for the continent's numero uno femme fatale, she also helpfully exposes the well-known interior of her vagina as hubby cheerfully sodomises her – it's a figurative moment of warmth and closeness that's a bit like seeing a photo of an old friend.

In terms of art direction, the whole thing is pure **HUSTLER**, with the accent on smoothly made-up pelvic specifications posed against bright backgrounds. But as we all know, erect cocks are no go, especially when driven into the female anus. So what gives? Are these just the slavering shock tactics of the ultra-rich? A fissure in the usually carefully policed environs of the bourgeois imagination? Or what?

Hard to say. But with Joel-Peter Witkin and, previously, Mapplethorpe also working at this vanguard edge of broadly "transgressive" art, Koons' contribution would seem to be a talent for taking on board commonly consumed pornographic tropes,

isolating and inflating the normally honed down elements and then selling up fast.

Nice work if you can get it. Gradually the slow ooze of sexploitation is permeating even the high-art investment temples of Cork street and New York. The new age of naked fetishism as commodity is upon us.



**BLOW JOB - ICE, 1991**

### WRITER/ PHOTOGRAPHER

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# NO RECESSION IN MADNESS

*Sal Volatile examines the life and times of America's most pre-eminent visionary and publisher extraordinaire, Adam Parfrey*

In this last, lost decade of the century, preferences and tastes are becoming focused on diverse areas of sub-cultural archeology previously regarded in the politically correct white heat of the Eighties as way beyond the pale.

After the groundswell in New Age "philosophies", a reactive pressure of interest in cultural and behavioural extremism has developed, encompassing all things confrontational, maverick, exotic, berserk and just plain bizarre. And as the twentieth century lurches headlong towards the millennium there is an attendant upsurge in irrationalism, moral panics, weird sensations and sundry psychotic cultural anxieties. Now is the time!

There has been a kind of rehabilitation of the freak-show and carnival ethos, carrying over into the mainstream, most notably in the positive public response to media mega-promotions of such seemingly amorally excessive blockbusters as **AMERICAN PSYCHO**, **SILENCE OF THE LAMBS** and Madonna's **SEX**. Increasing attention is being paid to "deviant" sexualities, aberrant psychologies, cult activities and "mondo" world views of all kinds. The flowering "trash aesthetic" of the Eighties has mutated into a much tougher fix in the Nineties. Where cheesy icons of yesteryear (crazed old advertising, clothes styles and kooky TV nostalgia) once took centre stage, now a more virulent strain is emerging.

At one time, "trash" novels and films seemed to evoke a comfier past a world away from the Thatcherite extremism of the Eighties. But there is now a definite end-of-the-century temper: a dark celebration of a generalized sense of apocalypse that recurs in a slew of media from the music of bands like Ministry through to the hugely popular 'black novels' of Derek Raymond, Martin Amis and Ian McEwan; the art of Joel Peter Witkin and Jeff Koons; the films of directors like Lynch and Buttgereit and the incessant fascination with all aspects of crime culture and the ongoing spectacle of violence in society. Most notably, there has been no subculture of such pervasiveness since the advent of the Sixties.

This generalized area of "exploitation" culture has now become a firm centre of interest: an arena far removed from the restrictions, imposed Victorian values and sado-monetarism of the Eighties. This new

mood is reflected into the Nineties with a concern for a sort of private activism of the self, fuelled by advances in modern technology and fired up by a proliferating network of small presses and spawning sub-genres...**APOCALYPSE CULTURE!**

Sometime soon for sure the dirty waters of all the decade's bad brooding just had to break. And so they did, roundabout the mid-Eighties Stateside, in the person of ex Santa Monica student drop-out turned print baron, Adam Parfrey. This is the strange and shocking tale of a good old American maverick kid who will do to our notions of modern culture what Richard Hell once accomplished for contemporary hairstyling.

Parfrey had been milling around the fog end of the LA punk scene watching the mood die out and the youthquake of ennui that would later flesh out as "Slacker". He'd toured in the late 'seventies in a Shakespearean theatre company and edited his first magazine **IDEA** — "...sort of a punk paper without the music."

Eventually he'd hot footed to New York with a fistful of twisted conceptuals and a raw dissatisfaction with the usual channels of infotainment he'd absorbed through adolescence. The Apple saw him chump-changing through a variety of lowly book clerk jobs only to eventually hunker down with PAJ publications where he learned the insides of the print game.

Next up, his LA based friend Ken Swezey was putting together the soon to be legendary Amok Catalogue based around the stock of the equally infamous LA Amok shop. Parfrey was encouraged to call his nascent publishing outfit Amok Press. Allied to all the material that Parfrey would later release, the Amok Catalogue is one of the great wonders of the West. It consists of a large-format sectioned collection of damn near every crazily essential fiction and non-fiction title that you that you ever wanted to steal a peek at...but were naturally too afraid to hope for.

This is the Bible — writ new and fearlessly large for every twisted mother who ever felt a transgressive pang in their funny bone. It bills itself as the sourcebook of extremes of information in print, and if ever a text exemplified the pulsating puke puddle that is modern culture then this is it. Books on pathology (with pictures); books

on every nuance of gun lore; books on a paranoid rainbow of conspiracy theories; books on the best of the burgeoning sleaze scene; books on freaks and terrorism, sex, death, punishment...you name it, it's here. Forbidden fruit never came so well displayed and appetizingly sold. Or almost...

In the years ahead the Amok enterprise would come to a confusing end. Parfrey would split away professing unhappiness at the organization's "legendarily shoddy" business practices. Wildfire squabbling proliferated. Friends who've been to the premises confirmed it to be an appropriately scuzzy little shop of horrors stocking a minimum of titles, lots of Manson tapes and virtually nothing of the glorious products hyped so magnificently in the catalogue.

The mail order side of the deal also seemed suspect, specializing for the most part in taking punters' hard earned cabbage and dishonouring the orders as fast as they came in. These days, word is that the brothers who originally conceived Amok are now not talking but that the shop has moved into more salubrious surroundings.

The Amok catalogue remains a compendium of black bibliography, a lexicon of libertarian waywardness. It will be seen eventually to have done for the alternative publishing industry what the Sex Pistols did to the adipose bonfire vanities of the music biz a decade earlier. But Parfrey was only just getting started!

For him the seeds had been planted and the fleurs du mal were certainly going to be watered copiously. His first books came out under the Amok imprint. The start off was acquiring the rights to Nazi monster Joseph Goebbels' legendary lost novel **MICHAEL**. A strategy of provocative needing that was to become a Parfrey trademark. Used as the initial project base because of the potentially scandalous PR potential, Parfrey got the translation rights through his friend the painter Joe Coleman — himself a leading member of the (very) loosely affiliated Apocalypse coterie.

Whatever the fall out (and fall-outs), it was the title that would send Parfrey off on his trajectory of literary activism and eventually fuel the building of a formative movement which is in real danger of becoming a certified youth cult as significant in its way as Beat and Flower

Power before it.

MICHAEL has been described as a sort of "Nazi in the Rye". Since few copies seem to have surfaced in Blighty there's no way to tell. What is true is that the awesome folly of putting out something so obviously inflammatory would naturally lead to a round of accusation of sensationalism and worse, fascist sympathies! These are slurs that stick around Parfrey to this day. Numerous stories of nefarious cronies and activities circulate round London and flower so frequently that it seems the man must single-handedly be running the entire US Nazi movement. Few of the rumours are ever substantiated. Parfrey's serial liberal-baiting tendencies however remain unfazed.

Like any decent leper-messiah, Parfrey keeps his ear to the ground picking up on the bad vibes and filtering them through his own ill tempers. Most especially he keys in intuitively to the fault lines of today's modern fractured consciousness. "I run into some interesting people. Sometimes you talk to people who most would consider unsavory or extremists, and I talk to them. And I listen."

God knows what exactly is in the fucked and fouled air of the City of Angels but it ain't goodwill. If the Parfrey mindset is anything to go by, we are talking smogs of noxious mindshit – raw, untreated subculture. Parfrey lovingly collects it all in the reservoir of his imprint and, when the notion takes him, opens the floodgates! When he does a very hard rain indeed falls. Washing all the scum into the streets, natch.

Following through on the mini-seisms that, er, "greeted" the release of MICHAEL, Parfrey began unpacking his next trunk-full of body-parts, The Journal of Unpopular Views. Meant to articulate his general misanthropic sense of all-out negative discrimination against the bulk of mankind, The Journal was mooted as an alternative take on the: "...interesting obsessive, schizophrenic, fetishistic influences that were happening but weren't being documented."

This is where the fever started! The Journal was to turn into that master text of modern classics, APOCALYPSE CULTURE. And to this day I recall exactly where and when this blast of boundprint napalm was slipped into my palms. My flat-mate had the book as a present from an art-director on the rock mag he staff-jobbed for. He'd been told it was a good book to read on tube journeys since the illustrations alone were guaranteed to poke the eye out of anyone lazily sneaking a peek. Jesus H. Christ, he was not wrong! Everything about

it lets you know you're handling one of the most important studies of the decade, picking over the: "...symptoms and theories of a civilization in decay, convulsing at near collapse." And that's just the photographs!

Over the years in LA, Parfrey had come across – or knew friends who'd come across – some of the weirdest human mouthpieces on the late great planet earth. 'Weird' as a description is so hugely wide of the mark that one hesitates to use it at all. But almost no other tag covers the complete body-shock the reader experiences when exposed to the contents initially. Parfrey's thesis, underpinning much of his work, is that we're through. Once you've seen his unbelievable picture of the piercing freak hung via meat-hooks through his ankles it's hard not to hang your head and agree.

Parfrey's introduction alone is a masterpiece of twentieth century letters. Up there alongside Camille Paglia's marvellous foreword to SEXUAL PERSONNAE. The style is a dream-ticket mix of rock journalism Gore Vidal eloquently raging with Ballard. All written with a sort of para-academic poise and masterful purposiveness that makes it a classic of the modern idiom. Then, after introducing you to his analysis of the times you get to the core of the collection – the essays and their subjects. By this stage you'll believe a book can be as serious as cancer!

This isn't the place for a full analysis of the form and content. Suffice to say that perhaps the two most noted pieces are brief question and answer format interviews with a practising unrepentant female necrophile (Karen Greenlee) and an equally unabashed would-be child sex murderer whose hero is Ian Brady (Peter Sotos). Brief they may indeed be, but once you've fully absorbed both items they will haunt your waking and sleeping hours for a lifetime. Life enhancing brain damage guaranteed or your money back!

The Sotos excerpts are especially remarkable. The language of the defence he uses in explaining his tastes attacks the central nervous and moral systems of society in an appallingly brilliant fashion. Once read it is almost impossible to doubt that Parfrey has uniquely collated what J.G. Ballard describes as: "The terminal documents of the twentieth century."

It's not that the work is just simply some posturing, primally screamed rant against the crypto-certainties and unyielding politically correct platitudes of the fin-de-siècle liberals that gives it such an exhilarating edge. There's a sure sense that

an important nerve has been trapped here. And that Parfrey is sure as hell going to tease the last spasms of rationality out of it.

It's often hard to identify truly significant works so near to their actual conception, but the work makes you appreciate vividly that it doesn't just have its fingers on the broken pulse of modern culture, it's actually choking the life from the ailing arteries! Leafing through APOCALYPSE CULTURE is like feeling your grey matter fuse into a furious filament of cathode tubing; like a bile-drip of revelation turning acid in your guts; like total brainflay...

Sure, once in a while someone will turn over the stone in fiction – like Martin Amis with his shit-black comedies of collapsed moral squalor and inbred cultural cretinism, or Ballard's quintessential technophilic wet dreams – but nothing compares to the on-line nightmares of Parfrey's provenance. In this real life enclosed world of complex simmering madnesses you can easily feel that no-one will ever get out alive.

Over the last decade there must have been dozens of collections of free-thinking essays put together. No doubt many of them far-reaching and perceptive academic studies couched within perfectly acceptable sociological parameters. What makes Parfrey different is that he isn't holding on to the authorized versions anymore. He's outta here, right into the no-go areas and no looking back.

Parfrey has referred to his method as a: "necessary irritation." In that case prepare for the mother of provocations. The man's new Feral House set-up is the print virus that has mutated past antidote. It is the airborne king ink HIV that we have been dreading for so long. Your cognitive condoms won't work anymore – the earth will die screaming.

DIVINITY tracked the great man down to a hot fax machine way out West in the shanghais of Oregon USA after an exhausting Feral House promo tour. Here are some of his readings:

♦ ♦ ♦

*DIVINITY: Both the Sotos and Fakir (notorious body piercing adept) cases from APOCALYPSE CULTURE seem to symbolize your own vision of singular individual expression. How did you come across them before the book came out and what has become of them since? Was Sotos prosecuted, can you say anything about his rumoured incarceration? How was he defended? Was the interview done face to face for the book or written? It's also*

*mooted that Sotos has written a novel – will Feral House be publishing this?*

**ADAM PARFREY:** Peter Sotos and Fakir Musafar are two different and distinct creatures and are not exemplars of my own vision. I included Peter Sotos in the book for several reasons. One was to test the authoritarian threshold of the common liberal. I've since learned that many self-professed liberals hypocritically place limits on free speech, and are humorless and strident to boot. Sotos is an interesting case study à la Wilhelm Stekel of psychosexual degeneration, and also a striking example that during the Kali-Yuga the least hypocritical and compromised citizens may also be the most degenerate. The prosecution of Peter Sotos came about due to a politically ambitious District Attorney eager to enforce a new Illinois statute concerning possession of child pornography. The DA couldn't very well be seen plea-bargaining with this media-trumpeted example of "evil". They couldn't prosecute PURE for obscenity, which is difficult to prove since we will have the First Amendment. Sotos was eventually found guilty of possessing one magazine depicting child pornography, for which he was forced to perform community service and attend ridiculous "counseling" sessions. Let there be no doubt though that they were out to get Sotos because the town fathers found Feral House offensive. Sotos is up to his ears in debt for attorney's fees that are close to six figures. It doesn't seem likely that Feral House will be publishing any Peter Sotos novels. Even he finds them unpublished.

As far as Fakir Musafar is concerned, I was introduced to his work by Kristine Ambrosia and Tim O'Neill back in 1983. It was fascinating to see the integration of sophisticated, primitive masochism in the person of an advertising executive. Fakir, or Roland Loomis, has been into this for at least several decades, long before any of this Modern Primitives fad.

*What exactly is the Abraxas Foundation? Is it simply a hoax or does it act as a focus for Social Darwinist everywhere? Is it just a liberal baiting scam like the "final solution" ads for Feral House? There are constant murmurings of some sort of Parfrey/Nazi coterie. Is this simply because of the, er, robust libertarian views you espouse?*

All those murmurings are correct. I take all my Nazi friends over to my mother's house, and she prepares matzo ball soup and cheese blintzes for all us jackbooted hooligans as we devise plans to gas the Untermensch.



Actually, one must remain alert to McCarthyite "guilt by association" smears. People say that because Boyd Rice is a friend it means that I am a Nazi. You could just as easily accuse me of furthering the International Jewish conspiracy by publishing Jewish authors. One book, **PAINTED BLACK**, published by Harper Collins, intimated that my first amendment rights ought to be revoked because I am furthering the International Satanic Conspiracy to peddle drugs and pervert the minds of young, tender souls. I have published The Society of Cutting Up Men manifesto in my **RANTS** anthology, yet ultra-feminists have tried to stop me from distributing my books and speaking publicly. Actually, a lot of the smearing has come from a couple alternative publishers who seem to harbour professional jealousy.

The Abraxas Foundation is Boyd's thing. It acts as a mouthpiece for Boyd's thoughts that can fairly accurately be described as 'Social Darwinist Realist'.

*What are the differences – personnel wise, ideologically, etc, between the Amok, Blast and Feral House organizations as they stand now and as they originally were. Did they initially fit into some kind of existing US sub-culture? Did the Amok catalogue draw on any previous incarnations or inspirations? Did any other publishing houses or related outfits vitally mould your imprint? Any abiding influences then or now?*

Feral House and Blast Books came to pass when Ken Swezey and I, originally partners in Amok Press, amicably decided to part and form our own imprints. Amok Press

was formed by Ken and me near to the time when the Amok catalogue or dispatch was first being put together, principally by Ken and many other people, including his brother Stuart and Brian King, who constitute the catalogue's editors as it exists today. To confuse matters further, after a while Stuart and Brian decided to start their own book publishing imprint, which they called Amok Books. To make a long story short, a core group of dedicated individuals were atomized by such petty matters as envy, vanity, greed and anger brought on by imagined slights. It is a morass from which Ken and I have happily washed our hands. I do not wish to be associated with Amok, mainly because of Amok's legendary shoddy business practices. I hear that they have finally run their book service into the ground and that you cannot order books from them any longer.

*Your own writing style is wonderfully vivid. Does it draw on any antecedents? Have you any particular stylistic heroes or schools you looked to? Do you think it's a particularly American sort of voice?*

The essay has overtaken traditional forms of fiction. Ballard and Burroughs are the harbingers of this revolution. Fiction-writing has become a quaint backward pastime. Céline, Nietzsche, Spengler, Ballard, Bowles, Huysmans, Hunter Thompson, Pynchon, Beckett are influences, but whatever I'm just like an American folk artist in the respect that whatever constitutes my "style" was self-taught, through trial and error. I've never had an instructor that was worth a damn.

*Can you give us a run down of a typical day in the life of Feral House – is there a lot of schmoozing, drug-taking, lounging,*

**"I have published The Society of Cutting Up Men manifesto in my RANTS anthology, yet ultra-feminists have tried to stop me from distributing my book and speaking publicly."**



*conceptualising, etc, etc? Do you work at home or is there a central office HQ? How do you co-ordinate your stuff round the great nations of the world?*

There's excitement in gathering information and making deals and then there's the drudgery of business and production. I remember living and working in San Francisco. Most everybody was booting speed. Lots of talk, little was accomplished. I've got no time for drugs. I'm in the best position possible. I have creative relationships with my friends; it's not like working at the factory and going out and getting shitfaced to forget about your life.

*Are there any territories where Feral House is banned outright? Or where local print laws are too much hassle to take on? Are there US states that are particularly problematic? Didn't APOCALYPSE CULTURE get raided in some UK shops?*

There is such a thing in the US as an economic ban. I'd love the publicity of a loud government ban, but the kind of bans you get in this country are really under the table. Take, for example, certain chainstores ban anything "Satanic". Or feminists banning CAD because they don't like the look of it. These things aren't announced in the press. I understand that Canada has some very backward laws involving erotica and so-called Hate-mongering books.

*Why did you leave LA for Portland? Could you fill us in on how the two placed differ and what prompted the move? Is LA becoming unbearable?*

The riots were fairly close to me, and more are expected. The first time the rioters mainly hit the stores, but I think the wave of the future is to Get Whitey. Two intruders broke into my house and I held them with a shotgun until the police came. Then there were the earthquakes, and my rental house in LA nearly collapsed. Those incidents were the catalyst to leave, but I wanted to get out of there before then. I hated the perpetual hazy, smoggy sun. LA is the frontline of the apocalypse, and I visit the city often, especially for my Hell A columns, but as far as spending all my time there, I wanted to shift the Sword of Damocles from the nape of my neck.

Portland is great because it's human-scaled, you don't have to drive everywhere. It's got four seasons, great bookstores. Of course it has its drawbacks. There's a stifling percentage of politically correct idiots getting in your face. There's an incredible thing that just happened in town.

We kept hearing about all these hate crimes perpetrated against this black lesbian crippled woman, all these swastikas burned into her front lawn. She had become the town's symbol of victimisation. There was a parade organised in her honour; hundreds of people were hugging her. She was getting hate crime compensation from the State of Oregon. But then it was discovered that she had perpetrated all these hate crimes on herself! She'd climb out of her wheelchair - she wasn't really crippled, just faking it! - and throw a rack through her window or graffiti her house. She even admitted to shaving her eyebrows to look like she was undergoing chemotherapy for cancer! And, you know, it's not just this woman Azalea Cooley. This guy Laird Wilcox put out a report called THE HOAXERS PROJECT, which included accounts of hundreds of such incidents! Everyone is competing to become the biggest victim!

*How do you pick up on the titles you publish - are there specific Feral House criteria that are applied? How many projects do you have pending at any one time?*

The only criteria is that the projected book should interest me. Also, I've got to keep in mind that I must sell the book. Nobody's handing me any grant money, not for the kind of stuff that I publish. I must live or die by the marketplace. Right now I've got a dozen projects in the hopper. I plan to increase my publication schedule and do four titles a year starting in the Fall.

*Which PC organisations have been the most active or the most nuisance in attacking Feral House output? How do you side-step them?*

It would be an idiotic waste of time for anyone to attack our product; a few individuals and organisations have gone after us in fits and starts. The organisation "Morality in Media" attacked me for an article I wrote for HUSTLER magazine that supposedly inspired an attack on some child in Oklahoma. All insane speculation. The perpetrator of the crime was never caught; but the Christian right made a stink like it had to have been this nasty article by Adam Parfey!

*What are the top five misconceptions about you currently making the rounds? How would you defend yourself on them?*

Misconception number one: That I'm to be lumped in with the tattoo/genital piercing school. By and large these people are narcissists and dilettantes. Not my kind of people. Misconception number two: That I'm only interested in puerile

**"Shock, gory pictures and all that, blasphemy and all that heavy-metal crap is boring and sterile, as far as I'm concerned."**

sensationalism, shock. Shock, gory pictures and all that, blasphemy and all that heavy-metal crap is boring and sterile, as far as I'm concerned. Misconception number three: That everyone included in APOCALYPSE CULTURE is "celebrated". Many are included as symptomatic as decay, not as fannish RE/SEARCH style celebrity blowjobs.

*From a selection of your articles you seem to have a fascination with paedophile US NABLA organisation. Is there any particular reason for this or is it just a delight in the general extremity of their beliefs? Is Spielberg really linked with them?*

I guess you're referring to the 'Weird Sex Cults' article I did for HUSTLER magazine and the Spielberg-as-Paedophile that is finally going to be run in ANSWER ME! magazine after being rejected by libel lawyers of several skittish publications. I'm not sure this qualifies for being fascination with NAMBLA, but I am amazed that they exist...these disgusting middle-aged men who contend that seven year old kids want to be fucked up the ass. I didn't say that Spielberg is linked with them, but I pointed out something that no-one else is willing to do in public, and that is to describe Spielberg's obvious juvenophilia.

*You come down hard, and often, on Andrea Dworkin. Yet isn't she really just a kind of hallucination in negative of Sotos? You celebrate his own dark voice of illumination but view hers as somehow fearfully insidious. Surely her own ultra-individuality almost qualifies her for the next edition of APOCALYPSE CULTURE?*

Dworkin indeed qualifies for the next edition of APOCALYPSE CULTURE. You should see her novel, MISERY. It's unbelievable S & M from the standpoint of a violated, soulless vessel. It gave Peter





Sotos a hard-on for weeks. But I tell you Dworkin is dangerous because she's in league with right-wing Christian forces to create oppressive, ridiculous laws. These same Christians who would hose her off the sidewalk, much less look at her, are going all out to prohibit stuff as softcore as **PLAYBOY**. It's her legislative and prohibitionary side that deserves revelation and condemnation. Dworkin is one of those hysterical lesbians who believes that heterosexuality should be

defined as rape.

*Tell us something about your days as an actor and some of the productions you've been involved in.*

I joined a second-rate Shakespeare troupe doing **MERCHANT OF VENICE** and **AS YOU LIKE IT** in order to tour the country when I was 22. I've never seriously considered becoming an actor.

*What was your history as setting up as a publisher? Where did you learn the trade?*

*How did you wind up releasing Goebbels' MICHAEL as your first book? Were there constant problems with reps, distribution, etc?*

I learned bits of the book trade working for a small theatre books publisher in New York. The most difficult thing in publishing is distribution. I found a very good one, Publishers Group West, almost as a lark. I remember reading somewhere that PGW distributed several hundred thousand copies of some cookbook by an obscure

press, and I thought, gee, maybe they can do that with some of the things I was contemplating doing. Ken and I did Goebbels' MICHAEL first because we thought that Joe had the best name recognition. We were concerned about making enough money to keep the concern going. We angled a translation out of Joachim Neugroschel because he had collected my friend Joe Coleman's paintings. We didn't have to pay for the rights, although a Swiss neo-Nazi named Genoud wrote us through an intermediary claiming he owned copyright. He never produced any authentication of these claims. I heard Goebbels' copyright is held by the Bavarian government but I never had any papers served on me by any gentlemen in leiderhosen. The Goebbels book got an interesting response. THE NEW YORK TIMES found it valuable, but the NEW REPUBLIC featured it on its front cover, wondering whether the event of its publication might presage a neo-Nazi revival. I wrote the magazine, and they printed the letter, asking them whether they gave Penguin any guff for publishing the Goebbels Diaries. PUBLISHERS WEEKLY was alarmed that we didn't have a rabbi introduce the book. Ken and I were of the mind that readers were intelligent enough to come to a conclusion about this material without resorting to patronising appeals to morality.

*Everything you do is packaged and designed really well? Who's Beth Escott? How do you get all the ideas together?*

Beth, who's done many cover designs, is a commercial designer based in Los Angeles, who's been with us from the start. She's sympathetic to the material, which makes it easy to confer with her on the designs.

Ideas are plentiful. It's the follow-through and execution that's difficult. I've done a lot of the interior layouts myself, but lately I've been lucky to have designers like Linda Hayashi and Sean Tejarachi working on different projects.

*Do you really have a deep concern for the world's death wish? Do you have deep-down eco-feelings and green fantasies? Are you at all active in this respect?*

I have a "Malthus Was Right" bumper sticker on my car. Perhaps the world's death wish is in itself a green fantasy. Now with AIDS and other immunological follies running amok, I'm not as concerned about this problem. I'd much prefer seeing a magnificent redwood than a Mongoloid idiot. Humanists would rather cut down all the trees on earth than let a deformed baby

die. I'm not of that mind. If that qualifies me as being an eco-terrorist, so be it.

*Alongside your green yearnings, list five other ideologically-sound activities or mind-sets that you'd otherwise be ashamed to admit to.*

Shame is not a part of this, but some people might be surprised to learn that I support equal social rights and standings for women, would not burn faggots on a pile of faggots, enjoy Bach, Monteverdi and Beethoven, play the oboe and at all times agree with conservative commentators.

*Could you expand on your comment, "It's not culture, it's nature that's worth saving." This seems unduly humane!*

You're a little confused here. It's not necessarily humane to want to conserve nature. Some Greens might be abashed to learn that much of their platform was directly lifted from the Nazi Walther Darré. Read BLOOD AND SOIL by Anna Bramwell.

*"I'd do anything to save the planet." How do you sustain your regard for Mother Earth in the light of all the marvellously grotesque revelations you uncover in your researches?*

It's not mutually exclusive. A sociologist can also be an ecologist.

*What was IDEA magazine?*

My first baby steps as a publisher. It was a punk rag without coverage of punk music. Politics and humour. In short, a failure.

*What was The Journal of Unpopular Views? Was it ever a seed bed for the APOCALYPSE CULTURE format?*

Before I had a partner to invest capital in the APOCALYPSE CULTURE book I was toying with a kind of rant-format journal, just a mulligan's stew of stuff I was interested in. It mutated into APOCALYPSE CULTURE.

*The whole concept of "revisionism" – specifically Holocaust revisionism – weaves itself in and out of your work. Do you see it as an upsurging end of the century phenomena? Would you uphold the practice in other sorts of fields as an act of intellectual defiance?*

You've got it wrong. I've never coveted Holocaust Revisionism. If I did, I'd be placed on blacklists. I wouldn't be able to distribute my books. Look what's happening to David Irving. He was jailed and led away in chains in Canada recently for merely holding a belief that is taken by most to be nasty Nazi propaganda. It's obvious that Irving, a noted historian, truly

believes that there are holes in the gas chamber orthodoxy. If he were merely cynical, he wouldn't put himself in this position. Now the bookstores won't carry his books. And if he was a Nazi, there would be more covert means to support the cause.

And even if Irving were merely a Nazi propagandist, is it right to tell him you can't write this, you can't write that? Are we persecuting certain Japanese intellectuals for minimising the slaughter of the Chinese? Are we going after the heads of commies who lessen the import of the Stalinist purges? Are we going after Israeli authors for their Arabs-are-scum racism? This may be taboo, questioning The Holocaust.

I'm not a Holocaust Revisionist, it's not my bailiwick, but the controversy provokes my curiosity. I'm always interested in the manufacture of pariahs. I guess it's fun to join the crowd and holler and stone the evil one, but I've come to understand that quite often this hollering crowd is stirred up to misdirect their anger by more substantial villains. Case in point: George Bush sent over 500 FBI men to shoot a so-called white separatist family in Idaho. The charge? It was discovered that the white separatist had sold two shotguns with barrels that were illegal by a quarter of an inch! Now I find it interesting that George Bush, whose background is white and patrician, makes such a big show of shooting a couple of white separatists in the Pacific Northwest. George Bush wants to protect his own interests with misdirection. Shoot a redneck, win an oilfield.

As for "revisionism", and I'm taking about Holocaust Revisionism here – it makes sense that there are two sides to history. The side written by the victor, and the side that's not heard, the other side.

*You've mentioned your Okie KKK/Jewish background. Could you elaborate on how this might have unleashed or tempered your views.*

My father was very closely related to Jesse James. His mother, my grandmother, eventually married the grand dragon of the KKK, I'm told. My mother's folks came from Rumania and Hungary. I think that this genetic tension makes it easier for me to see both sides of a question, to be more open to a wider range of views.

*Isn't the idea of CAD kind of twee and cosy set against the head-on qualities of most of your other books? Your views about old-fashioned guys 'n' gals roles seem curiously at odds here.*

CAD: A HANDBOOK FOR HEELS is

definitely not for the angry and frustrated. It's cute and fun, but if you look at it, it's really a Social Darwinist preamble. I guess the prevailing fashion is to have a bunch of angry feminists ranting about how screwed up the world is, but I think there is something to celebrate too, about certain components of masculinity and the stylistic trappings of '50s and '60s bachelorhood. I love how the world was the man's playground. He could enjoy the shape of a woman, the taste of a cigar, the buzz of the martini, the thrill of the conquest. It's a lost world, and I found it evocative and fun to relive it. Many women loved the book, but just as many hated it and lobbied for its removal from the bookstores.

*Name five contemporary heroines/love goddesses.*

Contemporary? That's hard. I love Tura Satana, Vampira, Anita Ekberg. It's harder to tell these days with all that silly cone.

*How's your health? When did you start having to take insulin?*

Health is fine. I became diabetic while playing Oberon in **A MIDSUMMER'S NIGHT DREAM**. I hated doing the lover's quarrel scene, because I'd have to stand there for twenty minutes desperately needing to pee.

*How did you develop your fascination for satanism? Was it always a life-long obsession?*

I'm not so much interested in satanism as

in the person of Anton LaVey. Boyd Rice introduced me back in 1987 and we got along famously. His house is like **THE ADDAMS FAMILY**. He's a great raconteur, a gentleman, and though he wouldn't want me to say it, a really nice guy. He has an encyclopedic knowledge of so many things. Anton LaVey is derided for being a canny and a showman, but I wouldn't apply pejoratives to those things at all. Being a canny and a showman gives you a privileged outsider's knowledge of things that the rubes have trouble understanding. Anton is misunderstood, but perhaps this is all for the best. I wouldn't want to see him adulterated by too much adulation.

*Finally, do you sense a new burgeoning underground press broadly focused around Feral style issues? Will the broad range of apocalypse culture turn out to be the counter-culture of the decade, and will it become a mass consciousness issue like flower-power or punk? Are you the Timothy Leary of the new terrorism?*

You mean like, "Turn On, Tune In, Slit Your Throat"? The vision is homicide, disintegration and degeneration. The vision is reality, truth. It would be a different vision in the renaissance. But we have to deal with what we have. It's true that people write me all the time claiming that the **APOCALYPSE CULTURE** or **RANTS** or **Feral House** was a very heavy influence on them. That's nice, but as you see, it's not a big movement kind of thing, with

everybody getting together and tripping or slam-dancing. It's a lone wolf kind of consciousness. But it may be true that the mainstream is starting to glom onto it. Tim Burton is making a movie out of the Ed Wood biography **Feral House** published last year. What's next? An **APOCALYPSE CULTURE** mini-series, starring Johnny Depp as Peter Sotos and Winona Ryder as Karen Greenlee?



• **RANTS & INCENDIARY TRACTS**, Eds. Bob Black and Adam Parfrey, Amok/Loompanics Unlimited, 1988.

*The very best of crazed sounding off through the centuries!*

• **TORTURES AND TORMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN MARTYRS**, Antonio Gallonio, Feral House, 1990.

*Old time torture and pre-metal machine mayhem like it used to be!*

• **THE SECRET LIFE OF A SATANIST: THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY OF ANTON LA VEY**, Blanche Barton, Feral House, 1991.

*The unbelievable life story of the man who played Satan in ROSEMARY'S BABY. The facts are stranger than fiction!*

• **APOCALYPSE CULTURE**: Enlarged and Revised Edition, Ed. Adam Parfrey, Feral House, 1991

*The one they're all taking about. You'll*

## The Essential Adam Parfrey/Feral Reader

*never need another book. Ye will be amazed!*

• **NIGHTMARE OF ECSTASY: THE LIFE AND ART OF EDWARD D. WOOD JR.**, Rudolph Grey, Feral House, 1992.

*Sad life of Mr PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE. Soon to be a Tim Burton film! No joke!*

• **CAD: A HANDBOOK FOR HEELS**, Ed. Charles Schneider, Feral House, 1992.

*Back to the sexjinks and whirly girlies of the 'fifties. Unalloyed period pleasures. Unmissable!*

## COMING SOON...

• **SECRET AND SUPPRESSED: BANNED IDEAS & HIDDEN HISTORY**, Ed. Jim Keith, Feral House, 199-

• **DEATH SCENES**, An LA Detective's private scrapbook, Feral House, 199-

• **TALES OF TIMES SQUARE**, Josh Alan Friedman, Feral House, 199-

• **A POX ON YOUR CULTURE**, Adam Parfrey, Feral House, 199-

## ALSO...

• **PARFREY'S 'HELLA'** column for the *San Diego Reader*

• Feature articles in *Penthouse*, *Detour* and *Hustler* (esp 'Sex Cults' piece)

*With thanks to: Bill Godber (Turn Around Distribution); Your Flesh magazine USA.*

# SHOCK SYSTEM CINEMA

The continuing **DIVINITY** guide to underground film and video

If you are an independent, underground, alternative, erotic or amateur film-maker, send a tape of your work for review here. We accept VHS (NTSC/PAL) and Beta (PAL only). Mark all tapes "for review purposes".

## CATHARSIS

This is now my third attempt to review **CATHARSIS**. On each previous occasion, I've watched the tape, then sat down to formulate my thoughts on it, only to find that the devastating emotional impact was beyond description. This is a film which is impossible to review normally.

**CATHARSIS** was shot by Damon Barr, whose **ARCHIVE EMETICA** impressed me so much last issue. This is a very different piece. It's the record of a performance by Rachel Elizabeth, originally lasting for over two hours, and here edited and reworked to a twenty-five minute running time for video. At this length, it's pretty shattering; I can only imagine the impact of the full work. The subject matter of **CATHARSIS** is rape.

To describe events and set the scene in your mind: the tape is monochrome. Rachel E. is naked before a canvas, upon which she paints a child-like picture of a typical happy family. "A nice family, a nice house...everybody is nice. How could anything possibly not be nice?", she comments. For the remainder of the film, she tells the story of how she was raped by a family friend, and the effect it had on her.

The tape is unrelenting in its assault on the viewers' emotions. Repeated viewings don't soften the impact one bit. Watching Rachel go through hell as she relives the experience is deeply unsettling. It's almost as if we, via Barr's camera, are involved in a further violation. Obviously, it's a hard choice to make. Do we allow ourselves to witness these intimate confessions, or do we politely close our eyes and hope it goes away? In the end, it's supremely dishonest to do the latter. These things *don't* go away—that's the whole point. Not for Rachel, not for anyone else who has gone through the same horrific experiences. In the end, the only way to understand the trauma of rape is to see that trauma. Beside this, all else pales. No television documentary allows its victim-stars to release their pent-up

emotions like this. It's too real to cope with. And no documentary programme would allow itself to become so emotionally caught up in the story. Barr's camera is far from cold; you can almost feel the emotional shock that was affecting him as he filmed the events.

If **CATHARSIS** helped Rachel to come to terms with what happened to her in any way, then it has served its purpose. For me, it was a barely watchable experience that left me shellshocked, numb, and just a little ashamed.

## THE IAN KERKHOF COLLECTION

Ian Kerkhof was interviewed in **DIVINITY** 1/3, and now a collection of his short films has been made available by Marginal Video in Amsterdam. Eight titles are included in **THE IAN KERKHOF COLLECTION VOLUME 1**, and represent a wide selection of his work to date.

The tape opens with **THE SOLIPSIST**, an uncompromising meditation on sex and media overdose. As in most of the films, Kerkhof himself appears on screen, here in front of a bank of video monitors, on which is being shown penetration close-ups. After attempting to become a part of the picture, the man watching slices his body with a knife, eventually castrating himself.

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS** is a slide-show film, originally designed as part of a live performance piece. This naturally makes the video edition incomplete, but seen out of context, the film remains fascinating. This is a recreation of the crucifixion, given an erotic slant, as the naked Christ is gazed at adoringly by the crowd of followers and bystanders. A nun grips his limp penis in her hand.

**EGMOND GHOST POEM** is again a slide-show, but this time devoid of any human interaction, instead being a series of shots of religious symbols and buildings. It is, in many ways, the antithesis of **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**.

**CRASH** diverts from the direction of these last two pieces, and explores homosexual love. The film is taken from J.G. Ballard's book of the same name, and has an explicit gay sex scene read aloud as



two men fuck, kiss and caress. The film ends with the men dancing slowly, out of focus as the camera sharpens its attention onto the radio in the foreground. It's a scene which predicts the style of Kerkhof's first feature, **KYODAI MAKES THE BIG TIME**.

**1991 BLOODBATH** is a text-only film that discusses violence and racism. At less than one and a half minutes, it's the slightest film in the collection.

**CARNAGE IN THE CHARNEL HOUSE** returns to the slide images. Here we have a girl in a coffin, legs spread apart and hanging over either side. Added to this potent vision of sexuality and death is an occult ceremony, in which vampire-like figures sacrifice a blood offering. The visual power of this piece is quite dizzying.

**THE BOY WHO MASTURBATED HIMSELF TO A CLIMAX** is, at thirteen minutes, the longest film here. This has a man, naked from the waist down, furiously masturbating in a room full of religious and pornographic images. Porno spread-shots sit next to crucifixion imagery, which often is only a step away from fetishised SM icons of bondage and pain. The music moves from the reverential to the extreme as the man nears his climax. He comes clutching a statue of the Madonna.

**REQUIEM** closes the collection. This is a simple, yet clever film which takes the

viewer through a process of discovery. A seemingly meaningless series of black blots against a white background pull back to first of all reveal a girl's face, then go further to show that it is in fact a picture of two smiling girls holding a sign which reads "Beirut - city of 1000 and 1 night" (sic). Colour is added, and the image is revealed as a postcard from the pre-warzone city. It says a lot without really saying anything.

As is obvious from the above descriptions, Kerkhof's work has a number of unifying factors. Much of it has a religious feel, often combined with images of sex and pornography. This isn't simply a clumsy attempt at shocking blasphemy though; in fact, the films have a genuine reverence to them. This reverence doesn't, however, exclude the acknowledgement and appreciation of the underlying eroticism of much religious art. Rather, it enhances it.

Kerkhof's films are the work of a unique visionary. His feature, **KYODAI MAKES THE BIG TIME**, took this further, and his future work is eagerly awaited.

For more details write to Marginal Video, P.O. Box 18252, 1001 ZD, Amsterdam, Netherlands. A word of warning though - UK customs might not look too kindly on these movies.

## VACUUM ICE

Here's a film that you'll never see. Every so often, a group of renegade Japanese artists send a crateful of mad nonsense over to an organisation here. Some of this stuff has made its way through to the Divine Press offices, and **VACUUM ICE** was amongst them.

Devoid of sound or sense, this dreadfully meaningful piece of art meanders aimlessly for half an hour or so without reaching any conclusions. It's best summarised by listing the happenings. It opens with a piece of ice in a glass bursting into flame. We watch enthralled as the ice melts. The flames spread. Cut. Lights shine through fingers; a drop of water lands on the camera lens. Are we having fun yet? An unseen figure removes the petals from a red rose, one by one. The petals are then mounted on a spike-laden board, creating a thick carpet of red. The remains of the rose are laid on top. The entire sculpture is then set aflame. Changing direction, blood is squeezed from a finger, running down to the nail. Power pylons fill the sky. A projector unspools its film as the ubiquitous flames lick around it. More flames dance along a balcony. It's a pyromaniac's wet dream! A woman's face

appears briefly behind the wall of fire. Industrial wastelands smoke and choke in time-lapse action. A woman walks towards the camera and wipes the lens clean. It's the end.

While **VACUUM ICE** is almost certainly an important and symbolic work of art, it also remains utterly boring. Experimental and avant garde film almost by its very nature, is either completely marvellous or entirely tedious. It usually depends on the depth of vision and level of talent involved. **VACUUM ICE** has no real meaning, no point. It's pretentious nonsense masquerading as art for the easily fooled. The video came with a music cassette, which may or may not be the soundtrack. The music is slightly more interesting.

## A COSMIC DEMONSTRATION OF SEXUALITY

Recently screened as part of the London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, Shari Filot's work in progress is a strange choice for inclusion; in terms of subject and approach, it has no overt homosexual content. Nevertheless, I'm not about to complain - it's unlikely that the film would be seen here otherwise, and if the festival wants to stretch its perimeters to take in interesting work of this nature, more power to them.

At just over sixteen minutes long, the film examines issues of female sexuality and physicality against a backdrop of universal power. Most of the film has talking head shots of five different black American women, talking candidly about their bodies and their experiences of them. The discussion opens with menstruation, the

women revealing their differing attitudes and feelings about it. Some find it a magical experience, others dislike it intensely. Intercut with this are electro-microscope images of blood cells, the body's internal mechanisms looking like an alien species floating through a strange and colourful universe. NASA space footage reinforces the point as the discussion turns to the lunar cycles and its supposed relationship with menstruation.

From here the discussion moves onto sexuality. The women all agree that they feel extremely horny just before their period. Intercut here, most unexpectedly, is an out-take from some hard porn film, showing a vigorous bout of lesbian cunnilingus (the only reference to gay sex during the film).

After sex comes pregnancy. Thoughts on childbirth are aired as inter-planetary simulations fill the screen. Masturbation is discussed and shown, followed by female ejaculation (again a porno out-take is used). Finally, as the screen offers a timelapse shot of animal decay, death is talked about.

**A COSMIC DEMONSTRATION OF SEXUALITY** is a fascinating work as far as it goes, though that isn't very far in itself. As a documentation of women's views on their own bodily functions, it's worthwhile, but the mixture of discussion and external footage could be tightened up somewhat. There seems to be a certain lack of direction in the collection of hard sex and space-race footage that crop up during the film. They act as a distraction more than a visual aid. If this genuinely *is* a work in progress, then perhaps the final version will rectify this. As it stands, the film is never less than watchable, never more than interesting.



# BOX OFFICE BLOW OUT

Ian Kerkhof reassesses two recent cinema releases...

If you expected it to "make sense" then Brian de Palma's dizzying new film, **RAISING CAIN**, would not only disappoint, it might even infuriate. So many plot lines are left open, unresolved, not even referred back to that there's hardly sprake van een "thriller" at all.

De Palma is too intelligent a director to have delivered a sloppy film (the disastrous **BONFIRES OF THE VANITIES** notwithstanding). He is quite capable of performing the "tight" thriller, where every little plot detail falls into place (**DRESSED TO KILL**, **BODY DOUBLE**, **BLOW OUT**). If we allow him the benefit of the doubt and approach **RAISING CAIN**'s complete disregard for the spectator comfort of plot resolution as a formal device it might well be the case that the film is, if not his best ever, certainly one of his most interesting.

Midway in the film there is a sequence in which the waking up of the heroine is used three times in succession to propel the story of the film forward in time without explaining how it got there. Instead of fabricating a "plot" to fuel events, we are simply shunted into "the night after the events we've just seen" by order of the awakening. These rude jolts always imply that the events which we've just perceived as diegetic "reality" were in fact only a dream. This happens three times in succession. Which in itself wouldn't be all that much to write home about if it wasn't for the fact that De Palma then just continues with the film. He does not return to the "real" diegesis again, displacing our confidence in everything we subsequently see.

What does a film-maker intend when he makes use of a device like this? Obviously he undermines his own film's success as a "thriller" because the diegetic credibility goes to the pack. But I don't think that is what De Palma was after in this film. What makes this film really fascinating is that De Palma has chosen devices which belong to the cinema – purely cinematic possibilities – in order, not to tell a story, but to jolt the audience out of a story, out of his film, to create an experience of real discomfort and confusion – a frisson.

This frisson might be what cinema is, what the cinema really has to offer in terms of an altered perception of time and our perception of our perception of time. Something happens in this film that doesn't

make sense. It isn't explained. But the film goes on – in time. We go on. And yet we feel uneasy because it's as if we've missed something, as if everything we see is slightly wrong, just ever so slightly incredible. We're in the territory of dreams here, the territory that only the cinema (perhaps virtual reality??) can approximate. This delirious, uncomfortable oniric condition is in retrospect one which De Palma has been aspiring to in so much of his cinema – most particularly the peculiarly flat **OBSESSION** which I returned to after seeing **RAISING CAIN** twice and now consider to be utterly remarkable and way ahead of its time (1975). But not a thriller.

Part of the hostility **RAISING CAIN** has engendered is due to De Palma's prerequisite that his audience be familiar with **PEEPING TOM**. Fully half of the scenes and situations in **CAIN** are either allusions to or ironic re-workings of themes from the 1960 Michael Powell classic. Martin Scorsese has referred to **PEEPING TOM** as the classic film-maker's film about film-making (alongside **OTTO E MEZZO**) and perhaps De Palma's almost demented paraphrasing admits that film-making as symptom, as disease, can no longer be diagnosed as scopophilia but rather as solipsism.

In taking for granted that his audience "know" **PEEPING TOM**, De Palma has risked leaving a lot of people bemused and disgruntled. But that's where the cinema is today and I admire him for being that demanding. Nobody complains when Julian Barnes demands that we've read Flaubert, or J.M. Coetzee expects us to have read Defoe. Strangely enough when film-makers draw their inspiration and textual complexity from literature, film critics are up in arms to defend them as "art" and "culture". When a film-maker musters all his resources from within the cinema itself and makes a film whose qualities are uniquely cinematic our scribbles tend to bleat miserably about a lack of "logic".

**RAISING CAIN**, if not quite a tour de force, at least very definitely a tour De Palma.

**R**otterdam philosopher Henk Roosterling has made the point that merely filming a text by Bataille doesn't necessarily make the resultant film "Bataillesque". The quality that makes reading Bataille at times an almost unbearably discomforting experience is a formal quality. Bataille achieved this quality by utilising and manipulating the very structure of written language itself (sentences, grammar, puns, non-sequiturs) and it is one that must be achieved filmically (editing, framing, relationship of sound to image) if a film is to rightly deserve the appellation "Bataillesque". Thus it is that Peggy Ahwesh and Keith Sanborn's literal film version of Bataille's *Le Mort* (**THE DEAD MAN**) is simply coquettish when viewed next to Olivier Smolders' sublimely disquieting **ADORATION** – a "Bataillesque" film if ever there was!

Oosterling's point may well be applied to the domain of the comic book given the tragic (lack of) quality of most film versions of comics. Film makers have almost consistently missed the boat when attempting to bring comics to the screen. Paradoxically there are a number of wonderful films that are more successfully "comic-bookish" than the po-faced adaptations. Thus it is that the latest Steven Seagal vehicle **UNDER SIEGE** is an entirely more satisfying comic-book film than the complete range of **BATMAN**, **SUPERMAN**, **SPIDERMAN**, **CONAN**, and **HOWARD THE DUCK** fiascos put together.

The rugged, rough hewn casting and characterization of the film brings the classic late-sixties Jack Kirby – drawn, Stan Lee-scripted Marvel Comics heroes to mind. Indeed, the sixties are a decade that the bad guy in this movie complains he missed out on, he was too busy doing "dirty tricks" in various war zones for the CIA. The film's costuming and art-direction is lifted straight out of the **NICK FURY AGENT OF SHIELD** series, although Seagal himself resembles nothing so much as the John Buscema-pencilled early seventies **CONAN THE BARBARIAN**.

That Schwarzenegger tackled the **CONAN** role before he was truly up to it as an actor remains a great pity, not to mention the groaning pretensions of Milius' direction which attempted to heave the comic strip out of "pulp" and up into the heady domain of "art".



#### RAISING CAIN

UNDER SIEGE is thankfully a film utterly devoid of pretension. Instead it just whizzes along, bursting with energy and relishing in its own absurd defiance of logic. Twice in the film Seagal is saved by the most preposterous intervention of chance: and the premiere night audience in Amsterdam's City 1 loved it, they cheered!

They also all roared in approval when Seagal took out one of his veritable army of opponents by impaling him with a metal girder. In its few scenes involving graphic violence, the film displays an interesting and sophisticated awareness of its audience's expectations. UNDER SIEGE's makers know that "the kids out

there" are all pretty much immune to extreme gore these days, and so instead of giving us slow motion close-ups of the eye-gouging and throat-tearing that Seagal occasionally gets up to ("I don't like killing people" he says laconically), they cut away instantly on the moment of splatter. This device works to make the grue all the more visceral – a welcome return to the power of understated violence in the satiated arena of the contemporary action movie.

Seagal fans will miss the in-depth characterization that has up to now put him in a completely different league from the other "tough guy" stars like Van Damme and Norris. In fact the gritty urban verisimilitude of OUT FOR JUSTICE with its almost painful poetry of community, commitment and context for the violent hero is light years away from this carefree comic strip romp.

Nonetheless UNDER SIEGE is a comic book film that really works. If any of your erudite cinefile friends haven't heard of Steven Seagal yet, just tell them: "He's the good guy".



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# CARRY ON CAMPING

Two forgotten Drag Queen movies rediscovered  
and raved over by **Cherry Maraschino**

**D**espite the ever-increasing number of books devoted to cult movies, there remain a few examples of bizarre celluloid that slip the net of just about everyone. Movies for which there are no reference points, no records. Movies that no-one seems to have heard of. Often, they've sat undiscovered for decades, before finally being unearthed. For hardened movie cultists, there is no greater joy than to stumble upon a lost gem...and that's what recently happened to me.

When I saw the inclusion of two Sixties drag queen films in the programme of the recent London Lesbian and Gay Film Festival, I was intrigued to say the least. I decided to investigate further, and found myself looking at two of the wildest, weirdest films never to emerge from the underground.

Both **WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?** and **ALL ABOUT ALICE** were made in the mid-Sixties, according to the press release. I'm prepared to believe that about the former, but the latter movie seems more likely to be early Seventies. Both were made by Ray Harrison (**BABY JANE** under the pseudonym "Connie B. De Mille"), and both are full throttle, camped-up, transvestite re-runs of Bette Davis films!

**WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?** is the more entertaining of the two, possibly because its source was so ripe for this sort of treatment. After all, **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?** is often unintentionally campy itself, and its overblown performances aren't *too* removed from the hysterical behaviour seen here.

Shot in black and white and silent (the dialogue appearing on title cards), the story sticks quite closely to the original. Baby Jane Hudson (played with astonishing gusto by Freida) is a faded child performer who's sister Blanche (Roz Berri) becomes a Hollywood star and eclipses the career of her forgotten sibling. After Blanche wins the Oscar, Baby Jane gets behind the wheel of their car and runs her down in a fit of jealousy, crippling her. The film then leaps thirty years, and Blanche is watching herself on TV while a boozed-up Jane prepares "din-din". "Watch out for dat crazy sister of yours", the maid warns Blanche, "the hate in her heart done drove

her mad". And sure enough, Jane serves up a meal of live doves!

Meanwhile, Ma Wiggins and her fat-boy son Edward spot Jane's classified ad for a pianist to help with her planned comeback. He arrives for a rehearsal, but Blanche interrupts, and is beaten by an enraged Jane. While this is happening, Edward spots a half-empty bottle on the piano, and realises Jane's affliction.

As Jane drives Fat Eddy home, Blanche crawls down the stairs and tries to reach the Phone. Jane catches her, and viciously beats her up, swinging her over her head and dragging her upstairs.

Later, the maid discovers Blanche bound

and gagged in the closet, but is hammered by Jane as she attempts to free her. The deranged Jane bundles Blanche into the car and heads for the beach, but Edward spots them leave and gives chase, with his mother and the now-recovered maid.

Blanche escapes from her mad sister, but her wheelchair takes her tumbling over a cliff edge. But, all ends happily with Blanche recovering the power in her legs as a result of her fall, and reaching reconciliation with Jane, to whom she hands the treasured Oscar...

It's a hilariously spot-on spoof. Freida is often closer to Bette Davis than Davis herself, tottering around melodramatically,

## What Really



## Happened To



## Baby Jane?



knocking back drinks and abusing her hapless sister. It often plays like a home-movie, and that's probably not too far from the truth. Everyone seems to be enjoying themselves as they merrily trash the pompous source film. In fact, this is a lot more fun than Robert Aldrich's original could ever be. The whole film bounces along with a barely contained glee.

**ALL ABOUT ALICE** is a somewhat bigger production, this time with colour and sound. Based around **ALL ABOUT EVE**, its campy theme song sets the scene for a heady bout of scenery chewing.

Warren Flemming plays Broadway star Mona Manning, who is convinced to hire demure Alice Barrington (Jarman Christopher) as her secretary after a sob story in which Alice tells her that she's an orphan who's husband died in Vietnam. She gets the job and becomes a highly efficient secretary organising Mona's life and slowly working her way into her circle of friends. She copies Mona's (ludicrously excessive)

walk ("you have such a beautiful walk, Miss Manning", she explains), and takes a fancy to Mona's toy-boy lover Mike (Dakota).

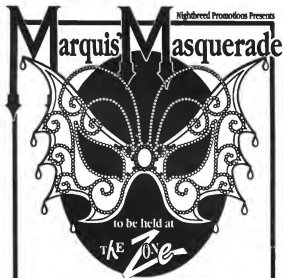
Alice asks the wife of Mona's producer to arrange for her to become her employer's understudy in the play. She impresses everyone during her audition, much to the chagrin of Mona, who can't bear competition. But being an understudy for an actress who never misses a performance isn't enough for the ruthlessly ambitious Alice. She arranges for Mona to be stranded after a weekend in the mountains, causing her to be absent from the play. Alice takes her place, and is a smash hit with the critics.

The next morning, Alice seduces Mike. Mona returns home and finds them in bed together. She kicks them out, but it's too late. Alice takes the world by storm. Gossip columnist Madison Divine then tells her that he's discovered the truth about her. She was, in fact, a hooker in San Francisco, not an orphaned war-widow, and he threatens to blow the whistle on her unless she marries

him. Desperate to be a massive star, Alice reluctantly agrees...

**ALL ABOUT ALICE** is less deliberately comical than **BABY JANE**, owing more to the Warhol/Waters/Kuchar school of high camp movie-making. Flemming gives a frantically excessive performance as Mona, arms waving with abandon as she runs the gauntlet of emotional mania. The film also has a couple of fairly frank sex scenes, with the muscle-bound Dakota happily displaying his dick for all to see as he grapples and gropes with both leading "ladies".

Both these films remain more or less unheralded for now, and it'll be interesting to see if they start to develop a following in the wake of their public showing. **BABY JANE** has been released on tape in the States by Tremaglio Productions, and there are apparently three more movies in this series. The mind boggles as to what they might be, but if we find out, you'll be the first to know...



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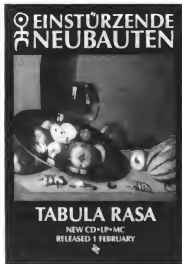
The new Cranes album **FOREVER** (Dedicated LP) sees the apocalyptic expressionism of their previous work tempered into a more immediately "commercial" sound. Not that the band have sold out in the least; in fact this album is a thoroughly awesome piece of work. The music runs from eerily haunting melodies to pounding, pulsating dives into despair, all playing host to the ethereal child-like erotic whisperings of Alison Shaw. The songs on this album float and pulse in a dreamlike fashion that can't help but lift the listener onto a higher plain of existence, however momentarily. Tracks like **CLEAR** throb with a malevolent aggression whilst others such as **FAR AWAY** are delicate, pretty cries from the soul. It's touchingly sweet, but retains the dark undercurrent that made the band's early work such a spiritually enlightening

affair. Judging from this album, touring with The Cure has had no ill effects on the band, other than to give them the confidence to take on the mega-bucks goth heroes at their own game and wipe the floor with them (admittedly, no *too* difficult a task...). Whatever, **FOREVER** is delicious stuff indeed. It's a gorgeous, beautiful and existential work that bodes well for the future of a band who already have a special place in the heart of **DIVINITY**.

Crash Worship's **ASESINOS** (Cold Spring Records CD) has an appeal that is almost subliminal. It's hard to describe their output as music in the conventional sense, though that in itself is no bad thing. This is more like the soundtrack to your deepest darkest dreams, as it sequences sounds into the right side of your brain. The sounds emitting here are - whisper it near social workers - almost ritualistic. One can easily imagine the pagan acts of subversive dementia taking place with this as their driving force. Designed to be played loud at those special times of the year, this is a transmission to fear and savour.

Soviet France's **COLLUSION** (The Grey Area CD) is a collection of material originally recorded for compilation projects between 1984 and 1991. This doesn't allow the usual explorations in sound atmospherics that the "band" usually create, and instead offers a wide range of Soviet France concepts. The music on offer here ranges from haunting mood music such as the devotional **FIRST VIGIL** through to sound bite cut-up material like **SOMETHING THIS BEAUTIFUL** and **WHITE DUSK**. The CD opens with **RAM**, which has a ranting evangelist telling it like it was about the Jonestown massacre, and ends with the operatic howling of **FUGITIVE**. The sounds in between are soothing, unsettling and haunting by turn, running the gauntlet of the project's work. As such, it serves as a fascinating introduction to the world of Soviet France, and the curious would do well to give it a listen, preferably in a dark room with no distractions.

Einstuzende Neubauten can always be relied upon to come up with something interesting, and their latest release **TABULA RASA** (Mute CD) is no exception. Even before you press play, the beautiful packaging of this album has you drooling in anticipation, and the music



doesn't disappoint. It's a world away from the vigorous metal banging and industrial fury of old, instead weaving a web of ethereal sound and brooding menace that nestles in the back of your mind like a spider waiting to pounce. The epic track here is **HEADCLEANER**, which is the closest to the violent rages of an earlier vintage, hammering away at your consciousness for fifteen minutes. However, it's on tracks like the almost pop **DIE INTERIMSLIEBENDEN** and the unsettlingly pretty **BLUME** that the band seem to be at their most inspired. **TABULA RASA** is a triumph of art over commerce, and deserves a place in all discerning collections.

DAVID FLINT

Skullflower bass player Anthony Di Franco has poked his proverbial finger into several bands over the last few years, and at long last some of his non-Skullflower output is coming out of the closet and onto your turntable. First is a 7" by his solo project **JFK**, titled **SEXODUS/TEMPLE OF SET** (Fourth Dimension Records. P.O. Box 63, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 6YU). Both tracks are frighteningly massive, earth trembling, bass driven beasts which grind away relentlessly, inevitably imploding in a feedback whirlwind. There's only 552 of these little blighters in existence, so catch 'em while you can.

Another project by Di Franco is a power



Ethereal and erotic -  
Cranes' Alison Shaw

electronics outfit called Putrefier, which gives vent to his more metallic screech obsessions. The single consists of two long tracks, **PRAY FOR FIRE (WOLF OUR)** and **BODY HOLE (MEAT RACK)**, both of which sound like they were recorded in a heavy industry factory, with clanking machinery going apeshit (moreso the second track). Just when you thought this sort of sound could go nowhere else, Putrefier have saved the day. It's on the Birthbiter label (sorry, I have no address), and although Putrefier have appeared on several cassette releases, this marks their vinyl debut by the looks of things. What I want to know is: when is Di Franco going to release some of his Sleeper tracks?

Keeping in the electronic mode, but this time in a much more atmospheric way, three of Germany's leading modern composers have got together for a series of collaborative CD's on the Tonart label (Tonart Berlin, Paulsborner Str 10, W-1000, Berlin 31, Germany). Lars Stroschen, Conrad Schnitzler and Jorg Thomasius all have very similar soundtracky styles, so the tracks blend into each other without jarring the listener. Each have provided several tracks and then for the last three, each has used material from the CD to come up with a new track - a sort of remix for non-jerks. All in all, the washes of synth and loop effects prove highly effective for listeners of a trippy disposition: throwing a whole world at your ears and watching it fragment in your head. Very beautiful indeed. Naturally enough the title of the CD is **EINS ("ONE")**. The second CD (I wonder what that's called?) is already out. Collecting the set seems a mighty appealing idea to me.

And while we're on the subject of wiggling out, ex-Original Sins guitarist "JT" has a second album out called **MESHES IN THE AFTERNOON** on the seminal Twisted Village label (again no address, but these are all available in the usual places you'd expect). Naturally enough, the title refers to the classic film by American filmmaker Maya Deren. If there's going to be an album inspired by that film then this may as well be it. It's a relatively brief spin into the psyche world of JT, with his Gibby sounding vocals and nods to pre-Banana Velvets meanderings. Much of the psyche world is retrogressive and pretty much pointless, but JT (formerly Brother JT) has an intensely personal approach that many could do well to learn from. It's a pity that it's limited to a numbered edition of 400, as this is an LP that an awful lot of people should own. It's also unfortunate that a recent edition of **RECORD COLLECTOR** magazine mentioned JT

and the Twisted Village label generally, as this now means that supposed "collectors" will snap up all the remaining copies of this excellent LP, and sell 'em back to the real fans for stupid prices. Annoyed? Me too. I'm still crawling around on my hands and knees looking for his first album **DESCENT**. Hell.

But enough of this obscurity. what better way to clear a mind than a dose of...no, not the clap...a dose of guitar thumping. Current punching bag Nirvana have always been the target of ridicule, and perhaps rightly so given the unadventurous approach to their sound. So it was a surprise to see the new split single with the genius that is Jesus Lizard on their **OH THE GUILT/PUSS 7"** on the always reliable Touch and Go label (P.O. Box 59, London N22 1AR). Nirvana's 8-track song **OH THE GUILT** is perhaps the best thing they've ever done, with its stop/start thrash. Heck, I even played it a second time to make sure I wasn't mistaken. But sure enough, it's worth having. Hopefully, this marks a new era for them. Obviously Jesus Lizard are very much the stars of this single, with **PUSS**. It's prime Jesus Lizard - a band that have yet to fail to deliver. Astounding stuff. And just to top things off, it's in a rather fetching blue vinyl.

On the other end of the guitar scale are Gallon Drunk, another band that can be relied on for a personal, somewhat drunken (ho!ho!...cough) sound. Their new album **FROM THE HEART OF TOWN** (Clawfist, 231 Portobello Road, London W11 1LT) sees them continue to evolve into a band that works damn hard on every track. The ten new tracks (including the new single **BEDLAM**) show them more confident than before, with an ear to exploring new rhythms. Initial copies of the LP version come with a live 12" consisting of three tracks, including a huge version of their classic **TWO WINGS MAMBO**. It's certainly worth getting a copy of this vinyl. **HASSNI M.**

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If the interview with Adam Parfrey has whetted your appetite for Feral House goodies, you'll be mad keen to be one of three winners of a selection of publications from this publishing house to the gods. All you have to do is name three contributors to the first edition of **APOCALYPSE CULTURE**.

As the publishers, you might expect us to have copies of Deborah Ryder's **HALF DRESSED, SHE OBEYED** to give away, and you'd be quite right. In fact, you can win one of five special limited edition promo copies, signed by the author! A real must, if I do say so myself...to win, just tell us what the pre-publication title of the book was (clue: check out last issue).

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# SINS OF THE FLESH

*Tim Greaves unearths a pair of horny home movies*

A weary traveller stops off at the Halfway Inn (nudge nudge, wink wink) where he's kept entertained by a pretty maid. Night and day, in the bedroom, in the garden, in the stables... this girl seems insatiable. The poor guy eventually has to leave for the sake of his health. But as he staggers away we see that there are in fact two maids - twins!

The focal point of Harrison Marks' **HALFWAY INN** is the believed debut of the Collinson twins, Madeline and Mary, who went on to feature in Hammer's excellent **TWINS OF EVIL** and followed up with a couple of little seen flicks, **THE LOVE MACHINE** and **SHE'LL FOLLOW YOU ANYWHERE**.

The girls appear throughout dressed alike and are never seen in the same frame until the finale, so the viewer is supposedly kept in the dark as to the fact he's watching two different girls. That said, even if one wasn't aware of the upcoming twist, one might ponder upon the noticeable change in hairstyles in alternate scenes, since one of the girls has a fringe and the other doesn't.



**BLOODLUST**

It is said that during the filming of **TWINS OF EVIL**, Mary refused to appear topless, those scenes being left to Madeline to perform. That might fall into question however, since in **HALFWAY INN**, both girls are totally unabashed about performing full frontal nude work.\*

The slant is definitely on humour, the sex is as innocuous as one might expect from Marks, and the great man himself even puts in one of his frequent appearances, this time as the landlord of the inn. Great fun.

\*The story about Mary's reluctance to remove her clothes seems even more dubious when one considers the fact that the twins were first brought to Hammer's attention in a **PLAYBOY** spread, and both subsequently performed in nude soft sex scenes in **THE LOVE MACHINE**. Another modern myth, I fear...Ed.

A cemetery. An unkempt gravestone, almost lost from sight in the undergrowth... the dead are all too easily forgotten", growls the narrator at the opening of this eighteen minute sex and blood short, "but they're merely sleeping and when they awake they return to seek the food of life - blood!". No sooner has he spoken than we see a naked blonde girl clawing her way up out of the soil at the foot of the gravestone.

A bedroom. A young girl stood in the window... Jennifer is too hot to sleep, so she slips out of her nightie and stretches out on the bed. Suddenly, the windows crash open and the blonde appears. "Who are you?" asks a startled Jennifer. "My name is Carmilla" comes the response, and the two naked girls embrace. Within seconds, they're locked in a heady bout of lesbian sex. Out come the fangs, blood trickles across firm breasts, and Jennifer all but gets her nipple bitten off as Carmilla feasts. A crypt. A dusty coffin... Carmilla leads Jennifer through the gloom and the lid of the coffin springs open, it's occupant sitting bolt upright. He is Count Dracula. (Back in the bedroom, Jennifer's boyfriend finds the place in a state of disarray). Dracula puts the bite on Jennifer and she proceeds to fellate him. "I want you to become the bride of Dracula" drools the vampire and he takes Jennifer from behind whilst she performs oral sex on Carmilla. Hurling Jennifer



**BLOODLUST**

aside, the Count moves in on Carmilla, but as they have sex atop the tomb, our heroine's boyfriend arrives and thrusts a flaming stake through the copulating couple. Carmilla curiously remains fully-fleshed in death, but as Dracula withers into a rotting corpse, the boyfriend reaches for Jennifer. Yet she too has become one of the undead and the film ends as she moves in for the kill.

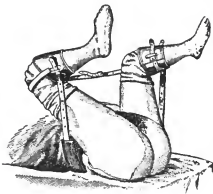
**BLOOD LUST** is the superlative mix of horror and sex - in fact, there's almost as much blood on show as there is flesh. The finale is particularly gory, and although it looks for a moment as if the owner of a pair of BBFC shears has had a go at it, I'd like to think it's the result of quick-fire editing on the part of the film's director. Whoever said director is (frustratingly) there are no cast or crew credits on this short) he certainly knows his horror films (*it may well be Russell Gay, former KNAVE publisher and director of many, if not all, the Mistral shorts - Ed.*). Aside from the obvious influences, there are some subtle moments throughout that any genre buff will recognise instantly; of particular note is the

scene when Dracula cuts his chest with his fingernail and coaxes Jennifer to drink his blood, which neatly pays homage to a sequence between Christopher Lee and Suzan Farmer in Hammer's classic **DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS**.

Although, visually at least, the actor playing the Lord of the Undead leaves a little to be desired, the two females are decidedly easy on the eye, particularly the buxom lass portraying Jennifer. Aside from the painfully wooden delivery of the dialogue, the whole production has a slick, professional sheen to it and the sex sequences are relatively explicit; although we see no actual penetration, there's enough on show here to see that old Drac sports an erection to match that of any mere mortal. Whether the sex is arousing or not is down to individual taste. Personally, I found the tryst between the two ladies the more interesting of the two main set-pieces: "you have beautiful breasts", Carmilla tells Jennifer, "would you like them bitten?". "Oh yes", moans an ecstatic Jennifer.

**BLOOD LUST** was originally released in the late Seventies on the super 8mm format, and sold for private exhibition through adult magazines. One of the titles from the Mistral catalogue, it was later released on video on VHS, Beta and Phillips (remember those last two?!), billed with another Mistral short, **ART CLASS SEDUCTION**. In later years it has turned up on a couple of different compilation tapes, Lydcare's **BEST OF BLUE MOVIES #3** and Rustler's **CONNOISSEUR'S COLLECTION #4**.

Quite what Stoker or Le Fanu would make of this excessively naughty interpretation of their creations is open to debate, but **BLOOD LUST** is none-the-less absolutely essential viewing for all readers of **DIVINITY**.



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# PSYCHO-OPTICAL CULTURE

Everything you wanted to know but were afraid to ask

**R**edemption Films continue their onslaught of bizarre and total depravity with a motley bunch of Euro lust stories and vintage terror. Heading up the former is Massimo Dallamano's **VENUS IN FURS**, the best – and least seen – of the three versions shot to date, and also the closest to the original Sacher Masoch novel. For the uninitiated, it tells the shameful tale of masochist Severin, who marries the beautiful Wanda and insists that she beat him and torment him by making love to others while he watches. Eventually, he sees the folly in this, as Wanda's tortures become ever less subtle, culminating in her taking up with a loutish type who sports an unfortunate moustache and derives much pleasure from beating the hapless Severin senseless and raping the maids.

It's all very hedonistic stuff, presented in a glorious letterboxed version. Dallamano directs with a strong eye for visuals, and there are enough scenes of whipping and beating to make you wonder if the BBFC were actually paying attention when they saw it. What's more, the film has been "updated", so lovers of the truly kitsch can thrill to Severin's chunky polo-neck sweaters and the astounding Sixties Euro-smut score, which goes beyond being merely trashy and takes on a supremely artistic life of its own.

**VENUS IN FURS** is a delight – savage and sensual, sweet and sexy.

Perhaps even more wondrous is Jesus Franco's free-form descent into decadence a go-go, **SUCCUBUS**. This wild 1967 production is proof positive that far from



being the talentless hack that he's often slated as, Franco is in fact a visionary genius with an eye for pure cinema. The film has a plot loose enough to be called non-existent: Lorna is a nightclub performer who stages bloodthirsty SM torture acts. She also has bizarre dreams and fantasies in which she commits murder and takes part in rather grim orgies. Reality and fantasy blur to such an extent that it becomes impossible to separate the two. It's far better, in fact, to stop trying, and simply sit back and let the visual beauty of the film was over you. This is film-making as art, Franco painting a multi-layered masterpiece of hauntingly erotic images. Entirely devoid of those elements that often let his work down (the frantic zoom, the rushed editing), the film floats gently over the viewer, sucking you in with consummate ease. The dialogue is decidedly weird, and in parts, Franco's cutting technique seems more in tune with the French New Wave than the sort of low grade exploiters we've been led to expect. This, combined with a masterful score, makes the film one of the finest works you could buy.

**SUCCUBUS** is Franco at his very best – a truly awesome piece of film-making.

Like Franco, French director Jean Rollin is very much a misunderstood genius, and his fourth erotic vampire movie,

**REQUIEM FOR A VAMPIRE**, is the last of Redemption's trilogy of strange Euro-sex releases.

The film opens almost mid-scene, with two girls in clown costumes caught up in a car chase gun battle with police.

Escaping to the country, they find themselves in a chateau that is over-run with vampires and their disciples. Then, things start to get *strange*...

Rollin has created a poetic work in this film. There is little dialogue, the story instead being carried by a combination of surreal visuals and wild music. It's a perverse fantasy, where anything is possible. There's little violence, and only a smattering of sex, with the two teenage leads stripping almost as a contractual crowd-puller. In fact, most of the film's erotic content is restricted to two scenes: the seduction of a vampire-victim by one of the girls (a sequence that seems more in keeping with scuzzy Euro-sex comedies than haunting vampire eros, with bouncy music and much chasing around), and a



**VENUS IN FURS**

**REQUIEM FOR A VAMPIRE**

protracted dungeon torture sequence which will almost certainly be removed by the censors. Irritating as this tampering undoubtedly is, it's removal won't harm the film too much – it has no relation to the rest of the story anyway. But then, Rollin isn't one to let insignificant things like plot coherence spoil his vision – if he likes an image, he uses it, often without explanation or reason. It's this lack of respect for film-making convention that makes his best work so astonishing, and why most narrow-minded and unimaginative film critics find him so tedious.

Again like Franco, Rollin has an unpredictable nature as a film-maker – when he's at his best, his work is nothing short of stunning, but he's also made some of the worst films in the world. Thankfully, **REQUIEM FOR A VAMPIRE** is in the former category – a work of visionary splendour.

Alongside these hedonistic slices of European sex fantasy, Redemption are also releasing a range of "classics". First up are **THE VAMPIRE BAT** and **VAMPYR**. The former is by far the least interesting. This 1933 cheapie about a mad doctor draining villagers of blood to feed his crazed experiment has its moments – Dwight Frye giving another "enthusiastic" performance as the village idiot who becomes the scapegoat for the villagers' fears, and Lionel Atwill as the seemingly friendly but really loony doctor are comfortingly familiar sights, and the film does have a certain atmosphere to it. Fay Wray joins this cast of horror icons, and – at sixty minutes – the film has no time to flag. It's fairly entertaining stuff, all said, but not exactly classic cinema.

**VAMPYR**, on the other hand, most definitely is a classic, and it's release on tape is long overdue. Based loosely around Le Fanu's **CARMILLA**, the film has a dreamlike quality that has never been matched since. In fact, there is more of a connection to surrealist cinema than to the horror genre here, with a disjointed narrative, a distinctly weird soundtrack and soft, almost blurry visuals. It's a striking movie even now, and one which comes highly recommended.

Frederico Fellini's **8½** was recently voted the second best film ever made by a **SIGHT AND SOUND** poll of critics and directors, and has now been released by Connoisseur Video. Of course, this is in reality no more the second greatest film than **CITIZEN KANE** is the greatest (Fellini himself has bettered it), but no matter. After the hype, this remains a remarkable achievement. It's

a semi-autobiographical piece about the film-making process, which develops into a search for himself. It's intriguing, funny, oft-bizarre and never loses its way, and if it ultimately fails to live up to the weight of its considerable reputation, that can hardly be blamed on the director. Over-rated, sure, but so what?

DAVID FLINT

## CINEMA

Retrospection, introspection ... the Germans have it covered every way but loose! When it comes to confronting those awful inescapable facts of the workaday human condition the German consciousness usually has an unflinching cinematic parable to aid the angst.

Latest from the line is Michael Haneke's **BENNY'S VIDEO**, a deceptively quiet study of the disintegration of a withdrawn adolescent boy in a wealthy hi-tech German family. Left to his own (hi-tech) devices by his jetset parents in the family's luxurious apartment, Benny takes in non-stop ultra-violence straight from his cable playpen. His favourite movie is a home video of a pig being graphically despatched with a bolt gun.

After various trips to his local video store to check up on the latest nasties, Benny meets a girl of his own age also emotionally stunted by endemic cathode paralysis. Inviting her back to his place, he shows off his arsenal of video and hi-fi which he leaves perpetually roaring out crud US heavy metal of the most dick wilting kind.

Benny decides to reveal his pride and joy: the very bolt-gun that offed the pig in the video. Unfortunately a set-to ensues and the girl gets it in the temple! The life of the family can never be the same again, and the story sees the morally bankrupt relations covering for their son's crime and disposing of the girl's body.

It's particularly strange that the movie so closely links in with the unmotivated kid-killer stories currently incensing Britain. But **BENNY'S VIDEO** is restrained and effective in simply letting events unfold. Although the sequence of the girl's writhing, spasmodic death is graphically portrayed through the video that Benny helplessly makes of the murder (rather like the infamous playback scenes in **HENRY**), most of the film is rather concerned with critically unpacking Benny's mental adriftness and the way it flounders him.

Haneke has spoken of a follow-up film that will complete a trilogy reporting on: "the progressive emotional glaciation of my



**BENNY'S VIDEO**

country (the last will be the story of someone who runs amok)." His measured style is intended as a polemic about US sensationalist cinema: "and its power to rob viewers of their ability to form their own opinions."

After a slew of unflinching studies of the modern psychokiller phenomena, **BENNY'S VIDEO** steers clear of delving into the blood and thunder and instead considers the quiet individual fragmentation that comes before and after such overwhelming events. It's a fine and firm screenplay. And when the entire trilogy is finally completed, minor masterpiece status seems assured. Sure to be lambasted for its timeliness in Britain, catch this excerpt before the media *sturm und drang* totally clouds the issue.

CATHY PACIFIC

## TELEVISION

The appearance of hard-core channel Red Hot Dutch, and the threat of more to come, has obviously given Britain's only licensed satellite TV sex channel a few sleepless nights. Now, The Adult Channel is fighting back. They've struck a deal with VTO (Theresa Orlowski's massive German porn empire), and are now programming some of their less explicit output. This includes some hugely entertaining female-combat material (**FOX**Y **BOXING**, **OIL WRESTLING** etc....hey, I like it...), VTO cut-down movies and various glamour bits 'n' pieces. It's not exactly a huge leap from their old output, but it gives them an in-road to the lucrative European market – though whether Europe is interested in censored porn is yet to be seen. Also coming up on the Adult Channel in May is **BETTER**





FOXY BOXING

SEX, shown in its educationally explicit entirety, and that old favourite **DEBBIE DOES DALLAS**, which of course will be missing all of its most memorable moments. Of interest to gay readers will be the channel's new series of gay programmes. **BOY ZONE MEN**, with its "raunchy host Jason" promises "the cutest, horniest guys from across Europe". It's only once a week, but you've got to start somewhere. For more info, tune into Astra transponder 26 at midnight.

DAVID FLINT

**TITICUT FOLLIES** is one of the most unique films in American cinema history. In 1969, this over-whelmingly fierce and humane documentary was banned from being shown anywhere other than to: "legislators, judges, lawyers, social workers, doctors, psychiatrists, students...". Added to this, the courts ruled it necessary that one weeks notice be given of screening and that an affidavit be signed confirming that only those who are allowed to actually saw the work.

It's an extraordinary judgement passed on an extraordinary film, the only movie/play/document in American constitutional history (other than one involving obscenity or national security) that has restraint on use!

So what goes on?

**TITICUT FOLLIES** is about a hellhole – Massachusetts Bridgewater State Mental Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Frederick Wiseman got permission to film only to find later that his revelations supposedly invaded the privacy of the inmates and so made it "impossible" to publicly screen. It also shamed the government authorities heartily.

Like **THE WAR GAME**, **TITICUT..** is a movie of such uncharitably power that it demands public screening. The "follies" of the title are the annual revues staged by officers and inmates of the prison, which are filmed as performed, but play to anyone watching the movie like something straight out of **TWIN PEAKS**. In fact so many of the scenes seem to have been reworked in other contexts by Lynch that there must be a strong suspicion of influence. Where Lynch, however, takes high weirdness and rounds it off with a vivid comicality, Wiseman strips back everything to a flailing wretchedness. As a study in human pity, only the great Russian novelists come near to anything so utterly crushing.

Bridgewater is basically Auschwitz minus the incinerators. John Marshall's blinding photography coupled with Wiseman's unflinching direction amount to a study of poor, defeated lives at the very end of bearability. This is an investigation of mental and moral breakdown on the part of the individual and the State that is almost literally a real life take on **GHOSTS OF THE CIVIL DEAD**.

Basically, the camera stays with and focuses on a variety of prisoners as they play out their small, ill lives whilst being either tormented or casually ignored by their minds. The haunted shots of constantly relentless, meandering uniformed inmates are impossible to forget. Bridgewater is like a Romanian orphanage for adults – some sort of cruel earthly annex to be faced before death. It doesn't seem real. Almost no other comparable filmic work manages so supremely to burn the words **PAIN PAIN PAIN** so directly onto the brain stem. Maybe no other film since **FREAKS** is able to righteously **HURT** an audience so much.

The degrading scale of institutional life is hard to comprehend. The constant recourse to drugging is shocking in the extreme and in all probability little has changed even today. One notable aspect of the piece is the quiet way in which the crew seem to go completely unnoticed amongst the chaos and awfulness – much as the goody angel in **Wenders' WINGS OF DESIRE**.

But like some pure Burroughs nightmare, the spastic horror of the endless impersonal hours and the bored taunting of the guards take a heavy toll. The intercut shots of the grotesque merriment of the follies make the whole thing even grimmer. The underlit close-ups of human features leaves a blazing expressionistic picture of life at the random cold point of existence. This masterpiece of modern reportage completely obliterates any subconscious attempt you might make to coolly weigh up

the issues; maybe see the side of the harassed guards and the dirty grind of their endeavours. Wiseman just doesn't let you go. It's all-out movie making that intends to take you out for the count and won't let up.

The ban on the film was finally lifted this year, and it had its public world premiere as part of BBC2's generally excellent **FINE CUT** documentary film series. Their praiseworthy unearthing does a lot to bring the plight of all concerned back some of the way into the public eye. Wiseman was ordered to put a note onto the end of the movie stating that things "had improved at Bridgewater" – a repugnant totalitarian demand that must burn the genius filmmaker to this day.

See it and seethe!  
SAL VOLATILE

## NIGHTLIFE

London fetish club Submission has its fourth birthday party on the 24th of July. Taking part in the celebrations will be **ZEITGEIST** magazine (which promises "rather novel attractions") and "The Rubber Dredds" (!) who will be performing live. There'll also be a fashion show, and some wild visual images courtesy of **DIVINITY**. For more details write to Chain Gang Promotions, BCM Box 4542, London, WC1N 3XX or call 071-284-2180.

## EXHIBITIONS

Not being overly fond of computer games – or their followers – I've always taken the Virtual Reality movement with the odd pinch of salt. But how could I resist an invite to "a virtual sex experience"? Trudy Barber's installation at St Martins College of Art was part prediction, part present day non-chemical hallucination for technopervs. Attendees could take their choice between donning the brain machine and having all their ills cured, or strapping the VR helmet on their head and playing "put the condom on the man and the dildo up the woman", whilst others watched their progress on a TV monitor. Success brought about an orgasm of flashing lights and psychedelic strobing...much like the real thing.

I must confess that I'll only become interested in VR once the graphics take on a semblance of realism. After all, it's hard to enter fully into another world if that world is made up of solid and inhuman computer graphics. So I found myself more intrigued by Trudy's prediction of what the future of virtual sex will be. To demonstrate this, she



constructed a booth with parallel rubber sheeting for walls. Behind each sheet was a naked figure, only their wired-up head exposed. They could writhe about, thrust their bodies forward, but they couldn't touch. The ultimate safe sex? Perhaps, but it looks like a bleak future to me.

Misgivings about the medium aside, Trudy's work was both amusing and invigorating. It's always nice to see new technology being used for sexual gratification, and I suspect that in ten years time, this whole concept will be scaring the government shitless as they realise the potential of it.



## FESTIVALS

Here they come and here they go...it's horrorshow time again kiddies! But if someone has to do these all-night sessions of shock 'n' splatter, then it might as well be Spencer Hickman, whose **NOTHING SIOCKING** event tries to expand the horizons of the notoriously retentive gorepup with a few ringers. Furthermore, Spencer seems to have a healthy level of intolerance for the more tragic attendees at such events, so I'm more inclined to trust him to organise a horrorshow than most people. The next event rips out on May 22nd in Northampton, and offers big name nonsense like **DR GIGGLES**, **DUST DEVIL** and **PET SEMATARY II**, low budget sleaze like **DRACULA RISING** (stop that smutty sniggering) and **TO SLEEP WITH A VAMPIRE**, the odd classic (**DERANGED** - without doubt the

high spot of the event) and others. This festivals "why the fuck would anyone make that?" movie is **MIDNIGHT 2**. Tickets will cost you £20.00, and you could do a lot worse than make your way over. Write to Mr Hickman at 50 Wingfield Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B42 2QD. Supply your own geek repellent.

## HYSTERIA

Throughout the history of **DIVINITY**, one cinema has been regularly mentioned as having shown more of the films we want to see than any other - namely London's Scala. Now, the cinema is under threat. The Federation Against Copyright Theft, acting on behalf of Warner Brothers, are prosecuting the cinema for showing **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE** against the wishes of Stanley Kubrick, who withdrew the film from UK circulation back in the Seventies. The Scala is a non-profit organisation, and will close if legal fees of £6,000 cannot be met. If you think it doesn't matter, ask yourself where else would show the likes of **CAFÉ FLESH**, **THUNDERCRACK**, **DEEP THROAT**, assorted Borowczyk and Russ Meyer productions, and assorted other uncensored cult classics every month. Fund raisers have been hampered by the local council, who seem to waging a vendetta of their own against the cinema, and who have now forbidden dancing and live music, all night shows, and other potential money making events.

This case also highlights the outrageous situation surrounding **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE**, and raises the question: should Kubrick have the right to withdraw the film? You might argue that an artist always has that right, but I beg to differ. Kubrick didn't finance the film. He didn't make it single handedly. Don't all those other people involved in the production have a right for their work to be seen? And is it really fair for a British film to be unavailable in Britain, yet freely available in the rest of the world? Remember, if the film had been banned, Kubrick would have been outraged, and would be grateful to cinemas like the Scala for giving it a chance to be seen.

Letters of support and financial donations should be sent to The Scala Orange Fund, Scala Cinema, 275 Pentonville Road, London, N1 9NL.  
**DAVID FLINT**

## REVELATIONS

### CHRIST SENTENCED TO DEATH. MOSES GETS LIFE.

Jesus Christ was recently sentenced to death in the small town of Bahawalpur in the Punjab region of Pakistan. Well, maybe not the Jesus Christ. Arshad Javed, who claims that he is the son'o'god was sentenced to death by a district Judge. It's no laughing matter to go around claiming you're Jesus in Pakistan, and to make things even worse for himself, Arshad was given a three year jail sentence for saying that Salman Rushdie's novel **THE SATANIC VERSES** is true. Arshad/Jesus is appealing to the high court.

You've heard of David Koresh. You've heard of Jim Jones. You've heard of John Major. But I bet you've not heard of Roch Theriault. Forty-eight year old Theriault, known as "Moses" to his followers, recently started a life sentence for murder. He was the self-appointed head of the Ant Hills cult, a small commune consisting of twelve adults and twenty-five children. Twenty of the kids were Roch's. The commune was one of many that are found in the backwoods of most American States and Canadian Provinces. It was your typical dictator-led sex, drugs, alcohol and crazy religion set-up, 100 kilometres northeast of Toronto.

The commune fell foul of the law on a late September night in 1988 when Roch Theriault, clad in regal robes, got drunk as a skunk and gathered his brood together for a "ritual". Solange Boilard, aged thirty-two, had a cloth stuffed in her throat and then had a deep cut made in her right side. "Moses" then stuck his fingers into the wound and "pulled out a piece of what appeared to be intestine, ripped a piece off, and placed the rest back in the abdomen".

"Moses" cut off his beard and long hair for his Kingston, Ontario court appearance, and even managed to get a grey suit for the occasion. "Moses" pleaded Guilty to second degree murder and his defence painted him as a remorseful "model prisoner", but that didn't sway Judge Robert Desmarais from handing down a life sentence. "Moses" is up for parole in ten years.

**DAMIEN DRAKE**

# UNDER THE BEDCLOTHES

*Paul Buck's regular look at classic erotic literature*

## MACHO SLUTS

Lesbian fiction has come a long way since the days when Vin Packer (aka Ann Aldrich, and real name, Marijane Meaker), Ann Bannon and Valerie Taylor could be found on the pulp paperback shelves in the Fifties and Sixties. Today there is the strength and explicitness as manifested by Pat Califia in **MACHO SLUTS**. This book is mainly a collection of short fictions that run the gamut from the detailed and sensual exploration of a cunnilingus scene in **A DASH OF VANILLA** to the most extreme S/M situations as found in **THE CALYX OF ISIS**. The latter is the longest piece in the book and one of the most powerful pieces of sexual writing I have read making me cringe, delight and feel that the author knows what she is writing about. She is not playing games. She has been there. But how to handle it. "The only way I could write some of these stories was to pretend I wasn't going to publish them," writes Califia in her introduction.

Writing good pornography is hard work. "The task of creating high-quality pornography is a challenge worthy of any talented writer," Califia states. "The average porn novel is typed, not written. Even the porn writers who aren't hacks feel contempt for their audiences as well as themselves and it permeates their material. She doesn't mind if it is regarded as porn. "This book will be accused of being pornographic and thus misogynistic, a piece of hate literature. So let me say explicitly, at the risk of sounding foolish, that this is a valentine in its original form, a cunt held open by a woman's trusting fingers."

"What are my choices as a writer and sadomasochist? I could keep my sexuality private, write about other issues, other sorts of people, and tell myself that these are more important themes, more universal characters, more valid as literature." Thankfully she has chosen not to, for the result is that this book should in time rank among the heights of literature.

## FANNY HILL

Probably the most famous erotic novel in the English language is John Cleland's **FANNY HILL**, or, more correctly, **MEMOIRS OF A WOMAN OF**

**PLEASURE**. It was first published in the mid-eighteenth century and has been the subject of censorship for most of the time since then.

Ironically there is no coarse language anywhere to be found, Cleland choosing to write a parody of the more florid language of the age to convey the sexual activity. The book is written in letter form "from a reformed woman of her past life, describing the steps by which she was led into the paths of vice and infamy" as Henry Spencer Ashbee notes in his **INDEX OF FORBIDDEN BOOKS**. It has something for everyone, from fucking to homosexuality (the sodomy passage was often expurgated in earlier editions) to flagellation and fetishism and more.

Cleland was the first writer to pen an erotic novel strictly for commercial ends. He was paid £21 for the copyright of the work, while his publisher subsequently made £10,000 for himself.

What gives this work distinction is that Fanny's feelings are explored rather than that she is treated as a machine or sex object. And there is no moralistic tone the pursuit is one of sexual pleasure as an end in itself.

**FANNY HILL** is often recommended as a good read for those coming to puberty and wanting to learn about sex. It is certainly a book that still bears reading, despite today's more explicit writings.

## THE IMAGE

**THE IMAGE** by Jean de Berg was a slim volume that found its way onto the French market in 1956 and later into English translation. It is dedicated to Pauline Reage, the pseudonymous author of the **STORY OF O**, and is prefaced by her. She opens her preface with the words, "Who is Jean de Berg?", a question that has often intrigued people, in much the same way as Reage's own identity has become an intrigue, and particularly in French circles where well-known literary figures eventually turn out to be the authors of the famous erotic novels. When I first read it I thought it had the hand of Alain Robbe-Grillet in its style, but later I was told that it was Robbe-Grillet's wife who actually wrote it.

With a theme that's not dissimilar from **STORY OF O** (and its sequel **RETURN TO THE CHATEAU**), Michael Perkins in

his book, **THE SECRET RECORD**, finds these books "the most fully developed treatments of the theme of love as submission to the will of another in all of modern erotic literature. Its means of expression is a cruel eroticism which although explicitly detailed is saved by the purity of the authorial style from vulgarity."

As Reage herself points out, the role of the woman is key. "A man in love, if he has any perception at all, soon realizes his error: he is the master, so it seems, but only if his lady friend permits it. The need to interchange the roles of slave and master for the sake of the relationship is never more clearly demonstrated than in the course of an affair. Never is the complicity between victim and executioner more essential. Even chained, down on her knees, begging for mercy, it is the woman, finally, who is in command."

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